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THE NEW POLICY.\*

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IT is only from a sense of duty which will not let us keep silence that we set ourselves to the task of criticising the able paper, developing the New Policy of the American Unitarian Association, read by the Secretary at the last Annual Meeting. The questions involved are of the most serious importance. According as they are decided one way or the other, the Unitarian denomination as hitherto constituted lives or dies. We are straitened by the conviction, which no appliances of enthusiastic brethren can mitigate, that the continued existence of the Unitarian Church on its old foundations is to-day in great peril; and nothing connected with this peril is more painful to witness than the blindness which refuses to see it, and the infatuation which meets all earnest warning with jeering incredulity. And we are not so callous as to be able to contemplate the possible disruption of a body

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\* Forty-Fifth Anniversary of the American Unitarian Association: with the Annual Report of the Executive Committee, &c., &c. Boston: American Unitarian Association. 1870.

which has been the "earthly house" of our faith, affection, and Christian service, ever since we knew "to refuse the evil and choose the good," without deep solicitude. But there are some things which are settled with us. Spiritually speaking, they are our all. Whoever touches them touches the secret springs of our religious life. Whoever wrests them from us tears away the firm fixtures to which we cling amid the bewildering pageants of faith and speculation that are forever sweeping by and passing into the abyss of forgotten things. In respect to these fixed convictions there can be no compromise, no "half-way covenant," no "dual policy," in the denomination to which our allegiance is given. It is not enough that they be tolerated. It is an insult when they are mentioned in tones of apology. Nor does it suffice that they be tacitly assented to. They must be boldly vindicated and unflinchingly maintained. A denomination that shows the slightest sign of being "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," cannot win, and does not deserve, the confidence and respect of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, however noble, excellent, and eminent in their various vocations many of its members may be. Moreover, it cannot waken the enthusiasm, nor long retain the active support, of those of its "own household" who have believed it to represent more perfectly than any other the pure Christianity of the New Testament, and to inculcate the most rational views of the character and mission of Jesus Christ. In this matter there must be no ambiguous utterances, but only plain, unequivocal, positive averments.

Having said that the paper developing the New Policy is an able one, we will add that its tone is earnest and its temper faultless. Believing that we are in close agreement with the Secretary theologically, and holding personal relations to him that can never be otherwise than affectionately fraternal, we can the more candidly criticise what seem to us his official misapprehensions and false reasonings. In order to exhibit the New Policy clearly, we quote from the Secretary's paper at considerable length. "The point," he says, "which I desire

especially to emphasize to-day, and which I think contains the essence of the whole matter, is this, viz., that whatever of evil may appear in the condition of our denomination,—I mean as regards this theological aspect,—is a consequence, and an inevitable consequence, of the great principle on which Unitarianism rests. That principle is, *that Christian faith and Christian union can coexist with individual liberty*. In theory, men have often professed to believe in this; but in practice, when the difficulties have appeared, they have sacrificed one or the other. With us, it is being tested. For one I have faith in it, *and mean, so far as it depends on me, that it shall be fairly tried*. Liberty and Christian faith—this is the dualism of our policy, and that of radicalism and conservatism is merely incidental. And important as these distinctions are, of right wing and left wing, yet they are so subordinate to the greater issue, whose inevitable accompaniment they are, that while individually caring for them very much, yet in the administration of your affairs *we have given to them apparently little heed, and have simply tried to forget individual preferences, and act without partiality for one side or the other*. It is this impartiality which is complained of and which we must try to justify. I have said that if we once adopt the principle of liberty which Unitarians from the first have always gloried in, certain evils which are complained of must follow."

One of those evils is stated to be, that "the Association sometimes gives money that goes towards the spread of doctrines which some of the donors believe to be subversive of what they, in contributing, meant to uphold." In respect to this the Secretary declares that as far as he can see, "you must continue to be a party to such an evil, or else incur a worse one by abandoning the great principle through which you are doing so grand a work for Christianity and human redemption." The present editors of this Magazine are courteously referred to by name as representing the complainants in the case.

The foregoing manifesto, with the exception of its statement of the "principle," is drawn with great clearness and force; but under its apparent consistency lurks a fallacy,

which we would not be at the pains to expose, did we not deeply feel that its errors are of vital moment. We will try to define, in a few words, the real import of the Policy, which is intended to cover and justify the action of the Executive Committee in reference to certain important matters which have been made the subject of complaint. This is the policy: *Whilst acknowledging the importance of the distinction between right wing and left wing, to distribute impartially the benefits of the Association between the two.* The nomenclature we do not like and never use. Unitarianism proper has no wings. It is essentially one, — one form of Christian thought and sentiment known and read of all men, the same now as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, self-consistent, and, in its main features, well defined. By the term "right wing," the Secretary designates what is understood by Unitarianism proper. We challenge him to give any other definition of it. What is meant by "left wing" therefore is something distinct from Unitarianism proper. It is something, then, with which the American Unitarian Association has no concern, lot or part. And yet the Secretary tells us that his Policy is that of impartiality between the two. On the face of it, this word "impartiality" gives to the Policy a look of fairness and equity; but in our judgment it is radically unjust and practically pernicious. We have called this a *New Policy*; and that it is we shall presently demonstrate. That it will prove disastrous, if persisted in, the logic of events will demonstrate with equal clearness.

But the Secretary professes to ground his policy on a principle of supreme importance in the Unitarian denomination. What is this principle? It is, in his own words, "*that Christian faith and Christian union can coexist with individual liberty.*" This is the great principle, we are gravely informed, on which Unitarianism rests! Now a principle which holds so important a place ought to be stated so plainly as to be understood without effort; yet, having studied the terms carefully, and sought the help of an acute friend, we are not sure that even now we quite comprehend it. What it ought to mean, in order to be true, is, that a society founded on faith



in Jesus Christ may exist in unity whilst amongst the members composing it more or less diversity of opinion is allowed. But this principle is not the exclusive property of the Unitarian body. We have no monopoly of "individual liberty." Is it not the principle of Protestantism itself, involved in "the right of private judgment"? And is it not affirmed with as much vigor and pertinacity by a portion, at least, of the Orthodoxy of Boston and New York as by Mr. Lowe and Dr. Bellows? But, evidently, this is not all that the Secretary means. His principle has a larger scope. In order to give force to it, in its application to Unitarians, it is necessary to widen the proposition in which it is stated so that it shall read: A Christian society, built upon the Christian faith, may exist in unity *whilst more or less of its members are allowed to deny the faith on which it is built!* This is what it means, if it has any meaning in which Unitarians can claim it as a discovery, the value of which is now "being tested."

Now, we deny that this is the principle on which Unitarianism rests, or that it is, in any way, a principle of Unitarianism. The imputation of it to the noble and saintly founders and builders of the Unitarian Church would have been resented as a calumny. Undoubtedly Christian faith and Christian union can coexist in the same community with the baldest infidelity; but not if that community be a Christian Church with the glorious cross for its symbol, and not if it be a corporate body, formed, as the American Unitarian Association in its constitution declares it was, "TO DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

Liberty, "individual liberty" in religion, what is it? All Protestants pronounce it an invaluable possession. But not for what it is in itself. It is simply an opportunity, — as the right of room in which principles may develop, thoughts breathe, sentiments express, deeds enact themselves, that it is so valuable. But where it is secured, as it is with us, what waste of breath to be shouting, "We build on freedom, nothing so sacred as freedom"! The question is, What do we

build upon it? what truths searching the heart by their light and kindling the soul by their fire? Or, to change the figure, having this broad canopy of freedom over us, what great religious ideas do we set up in it,—what sun to rule by day, what moon and stars to cheer the gloom of night? This question the New Policy declines to answer.

But even the liberty which is our boast has limits. The only question about it is one of more or less. In the case of the individual disciple, it is limited by his faith. His faith restrains and controls him in his moral actions, determines his religious intimacies and fellowships, fixes the bounds of his church habitations, forbids his doing or aiding others in doing any act that is contrary to it or subversive of it. It is limited also by the rights of others as to their religious opinions and the maintenance of them. In the case of churches, it is bounded on all sides by Christianity. All the liberty our Unitarian churches have ever claimed is that of interpreting the Word of God each according to its own light, and they have always maintained that, accepting the authority of the Word, difference of interpretation between different churches ought to be no bar to church-fellowship. They acknowledge every man free to be a non-believer; but, being a non-believer, they, on their part, claim to be equally free to say that he is not in communion with them, nor at liberty to propagate his opinions under their sign and seal.

The Secretary assumes a false principle as being that on which "the Unitarian denomination rests," and then informs us that "if we abide by that principle," we must consent, as an evil incidental to it, to aid in disseminating opinions which are obnoxious to us. Now we do not complain of any evil that is necessarily incidental to the possession of an over-balancing good. What we complain of in this case is, that the evil is not incidental, but, by the voluntary act of the Secretary, is made incorporate. It enters into his principle. He takes it in, and resolves to protect it. But we utterly refuse to admit the principle and thus we would avoid the evil. We know as well as the Secretary that "the progress of civilization is always, and, so far as we can see, inevitably, accom-

panied by great moral, social, and physical evils ;" and when he asks, " Shall we therefore decline to help its great onward march — in the main so glorious — because out of it these minor ills and wickednesses are evolved ?" we unhesitatingly answer, No ; but it is the business of the educator and religionist, as of the statesman, not to practice the " impartial policy" between those " ills and wickednesses" and the more powerful elements of good working in the progress of civilization, but, as far as possible, to repress them and get them out of the way. The progress of civilization depends not upon organized radicalism, but, as its advancement and triumphs hitherto attest, upon organized Christianity. What all who profess and call themselves Christians of every name need, in order to help on " its glorious march," is first to ascertain those forces in Christianity which have made it so powerful a promoter of civilization, and then to unite as one man, an invincible phalanx, to subdue and overthrow whatever opposes and exalts itself against them. When, again, the Secretary, in illustration of his policy, puts the question, " Was there ever a wheat-field that had not some tares ?" we answer by asking, " Was there ever a farmer who deliberately mixed the seed of wheat and tares for the sower to sow ?" We thought that it was the " enemy" who sowed the tares !

But the Secretary finds difficulties in any other policy. He thinks it practically impossible, he assures us, arbitrarily to draw such a dividing line within our body as would be necessary " in order to administer our affairs in the way that some would recommend. . . . They say there is a certain class of men, whom, because of their opinions, we ought not to countenance. Now the Secretary's reasoning leads straight to the conclusion that there are no opinions which the Association, in whose name he acts, ought not to countenance. But does he really think so ? Are there no theological opinions, in fact, which the Association, so far from countenancing, is actually combating, — opinions against which the Secretary himself is bravely doing battle ? To be sure, these are opinions of men who assume the divine authority of Christianity as the basis of their theology. Is it then a necessary use of

freedom, or an evil incidental to it, that we make war upon these opinions, and at the same time give our "countenance" to those which deny the authority of Christianity and work to the destruction of all confidence in the Christian Scriptures? But it is said, "There are such infinite shadings of belief that to draw any line whatever without separating persons who ought to be and act together is a practical impossibility." By what rule, we would fain learn, is it determined who ought to be and act together? The Secretary is not sufficiently explicit, when he states that "men of every shade of belief, the most widely separated by ecclesiastical relations, are found to have religious fervor, a spirit of ardent and generous enquiry, a fullness of the Holy Spirit, and certain kinds of positive conviction which make some of them the ones we can least afford to spare." Now it may be that there are such men whom we want to retain amongst us; indeed we gladly admit that there are. But if one of their positive convictions is, that the New Testament is unauthentic, and that the Christ whose work and life it sets forth ought not to be believed in, we are not able to see how an organization, formed "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity," can consistently ask them to stay.

We respect the feelings of the Secretary as touching those good and noble men whom he is so anxious to retain. We have no wish to cut them off or drive them away. Our difficulty relates, not to individuals of this description, who are more friends than foes, but to a *school*, between which and ourselves we find no common religious interests to hold us together. Almost every important paper or other utterance of this school assails some cherished point in the faith of Unitarians. The antagonism is getting deeper and stronger. This is proved by the formation of the "Free Religious Association," into which we have supposed the men and women, noble and ignoble, who do not receive the Christianity of the New Testament, would "drop of themselves, in God's own time, just as the rough outer leaves that enclose the bud," — to borrow the poetic imagery of the Secretary, — "will in due time open of themselves and let the flower out," when

our patience will be rewarded by seeing "the shading of the rose." In other more prosaic words, we have thought they would fall by their own gravity according to "the laws of influence and growth," without much pushing.

No part of an argument needs more caution than its illustrations; for if they can be turned the other way they weaken the force of the whole. With great sweetness and beauty, the Secretary represents the danger of discarding from the Unitarian body certain opinions which hinder its growth, by reminding us of "the stems of our grape-vines in the spring, that bleed their very life out if you trim them then." Nay, but O man, wherefore thy pruning-knife in this fair vineyard? If it be not used, what will be the condition of thy Catawbas and Hamburgs at vintage? And if the spring-time of May be too early for the delicate process of clipping, will not October possibly be too late?

One familiar with the actual feeling between Unitarians proper and the more pronounced radicals in regard to their several theological positions must know that it is mutually disagreeing, unsympathetic, distrustful, whilst personally they are excellent friends. Towards the objects which they respectively pursue they move back to back. We are not blaming radicals for this state of things, but we blame Unitarians for trying to cover it up. They ought to meet it manfully. But the New Policy refuses to recognize it. The Secretary has "a hard road to travel," and a heavy load to carry. Unhappily for him,—he will pardon the homeliness of the illustration,—his noble horses are harnessed, one at the pole, and the other at the tail of his cart, facing opposite ways. He cracks his whip over the ears, first of one, and then of the other; he shouts and he coaxes. The horses champ their bits, rear and plunge and strain with lusty struggle, but all in vain. The cart remains stuck fast. As a friend of "progress," and also of the "Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," we suggest the expediency of releasing the hind horse from his traces and letting him go in all his native "freedom," pawing in the valley, rejoicing in his strength, and glorying in his nostrils.

But the Secretary, fertile as he is in resources, sees no way of drawing a line. His imagination, doubtless, magnifies the difficulty. If his steady hand, moved by his brave and generous heart, should undertake it, we suspect he would soon smile at the ease with which he had been able to do it. Did we not run the line handsomely in the first Conference of New York? and rub it out handsomely in the last? The thing can be done therefore. Aye! and has not the Secretary in this very paper shown how it can be done? For ourselves, in the present posture of affairs, not being on "the war path," but studious of peace, we should be satisfied with an equivalent DECLARATION to that which he avows himself ready to adopt. With great gratification we copy and emphasize his words: "IF TO-DAY, OR AT ANY TIME, A RESOLUTION WERE OFFERED, SIMPLY DECLARING OUR DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS CHRIST, AND OUR ACCEPTANCE FOR OUR GUIDE OF HIS TEACHINGS AS REVEALED TO US IN THE GOSPELS, I SHOULD MOST HEARTILY VOTE FOR IT." But do you not see that this would be the abandonment of the "dual policy"? For we deny that it is possible to reconcile, so that they shall work together harmoniously, the two ideas, — "Christianity a supernatural revelation, of Divine authority, essential to the life of the world," — as by confession, or rather allegation, of radicals the gospels declare it to be, — and "Christianity a development of the human mind, partaking necessarily of its weaknesses, imperfections and errors." We deny that Jesus can be accepted as the Christ, as Master and Lord, as Teacher and Saviour, according to the gospels, and at the same time, and by the same persons, a theory concerning him be sanctioned, preached, published, supported by money and by prayers, which disowns his authority and strips him of all that gives to him an exceptional character, and claim to the veneration and obedience of mankind, without such a moral contradiction as would seem to be incompatible with perfect honesty. But we beg the reader to bear in mind that we impeach no man's honesty; least of all, that of our beloved Secretary. We bear willing testimony to the eminent purity of his motives and the noble consecration of his

aims and endeavors. That his policy is dictated and carried on in what *he believes* to be the interests of the Christianity of Christ, there is not the shadow of a doubt. We criticise not the man, of whom we could say nothing but in praise; and not the officer, whose ability, fitness and fidelity are confessed by all; but the *policy*; and when we say that to us it seems inconsistent with perfect honesty, we would take off the apparent imputation by adding that perfectly honest men may look at the same object from points of view so dissimilar as very widely to disagree both in describing it and in indicating the best way either to approach or to compass it.

It is argued in favor of this policy that if we draw a line which radicals and Free Religionists cannot pass we shall deprive ourselves of all the young, earnest, enthusiastic religious life which they possess, and which we have been accustomed to receive from them in copious measures. This is Dr. Bellows' pet idea. Do not believe it. What they have they must give and we shall receive, whether separate or together. Such life is a power which cannot be insulated. It is a gift, to whatsoever person or body intrusted, for the benefit of mankind. By a law of its nature it is penetrating and diffusive. Has it not been our boast for years that our Unitarian thought and spirit were gradually modifying the theologies of all other sects? and this, notwithstanding we were rejected from their fellowship as heretics.

What we have been saying about drawing a line suggests the subject of a CREED, against which the Secretary inveighs with a touch of sarcasm that is quite exhilarating. This Magazine, we believe, has never advocated a denominational creed, or even such a "Statement of Belief," as our distinguished brother of New York told us, two years ago, was the thing we needed and must have. But while no advocates for a creed, we are indignant when we hear those brethren who were in favor of a "Statement of Belief" two years ago, and those equally sincere and devoted brethren who are in favor of it now, referred to, in print and speech, as though they had been guilty of a breach of the peace or were agitators for the revival of some effete abomination. Men as profound,



wise, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of God, as any who clap their hands, stamp their feet, or scare up their feeble wit and let off their poor jests, in derision of those who propose a simple declaration of faith, have before now gone for an elaborate creed, and still go for one drawn out even into "Thirty-Nine Articles"! This is a question brought before the Association by gentlemen of prominence and power, and they will neither be shouted down nor sneered down. We must make up our minds to hear them and to hear them patiently, or else to have the batteries of our denominational eloquence essentially damaged in turn for our rudeness. Let those who cry so boisterously against creeds be asked whether their objection is that of Channing, "that they separate us from Jesus Christ." Remember how he said that —

"The state of mind in which I shall best learn the truth is that in which I forsake all other teachers for Christ, in which my mind is brought nearest to him. Let me go to Jesus with a human voice [a creed] sounding in my ears, and telling me what I must hear from the Great Teacher, and how can I listen to him with singleness of heart? . . . Unless Christ's word is received *as interpreted by fallible men*, one will be excluded from the communion of Christians. This is what shocks me in the creed-maker. He interposes himself between me and my Saviour. He does not trust me alone with Jesus. He dares not leave me to the Word of God. 'This I cannot endure. When I bring human creeds into contrast with the New Testament, into what insignificance do they sink! Creeds are to the Scriptures what rush-lights are to the sun. The creed-maker defines Jesus in half a dozen lines, perhaps in metaphysical terms, and calls me to assent to this account of my Saviour!'"

Channing went against "human creeds" in the interest of pure Christianity. He protested against them because they sought to impose upon him a fallible interpretation of the contents of Holy Writ. Against the excluding pretension of the creed he said, — mark the words, —

"The cause of truth can never suffer by admitting to Christian fellowship men *who honestly profess to make the Scriptures their rule of faith and practice*; whilst it has suffered most severely by substituting, for this standard, conformity to human creeds and formulae."

To profess to make the Scriptures the rule of faith and practice was not therefore, in his view, a *creed*. We do not ask for a creed to be accepted as an authorized syllabus of the contents of Christianity; although we have no horror of such a symbol, and have little doubt that one might be framed which all sincere Christians, who are Protestants, could unite upon. And we are of the opinion that it would not be a bad thing, nay, that it would be a glorious thing to have such a symbol, open always to amendment, to be recited at stated intervals in every Protestant communion of the world! Who thinks that it would not?

The Secretary's paper is so rich in materials that we have been detained too long in the examination of the Policy it unfolds. The easiest part of our unwelcome task remains, which is to prove that the Policy is *New*.

This is virtually admitted by him when he says that the views of policy presented in his paper have been held and adhered to steadily and consistently ever since his own connection with the Association, for which period alone he has a right to speak. Certainly, if he could have dated the origin of the Policy farther back it would have helped his cause to do it. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that he did not give to it an earlier date because he could not. He also admits it when he tells us that it "is now being tested," and that *he means, so far as it depends on him, that it shall be fairly tried*.

But we must not let the subject drop here. It is too grave for that. We must show the magnitude of the change he has made. And, in order to do this, we crave patient attention to some historical statistics showing the main currents of religious thought in the Unitarian denomination for the last fifty years.

In the year 1819 the "Christian Disciple," which developed into the "Christian Examiner," defending its supporters against the charge of infidelity, declares, —

"We are Christians, with the most sincere conviction of the truth of our religion, and with a deep sense of its inestimable value. . . . We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our guide, instructor, and master, as the Saviour of the world from sin and error; we have no stronger

desire than to be found among his faithful followers ; to receive all the doctrines which he taught, and to obey all the precepts which he gave. . . . We, as Unitarians, believe that our Almighty Father sent a divinely inspired Messenger, the Son of his love, to reveal what unassisted human reason never could otherwise have known, — to give motives and aids to a virtuous course of life, and by his precepts, example, death and resurrection, to prepare for us the way to heaven."

Professor Norton, the unrivaled critic, during that same year wrote, —

"We value Christianity quite as much as they [the Trinitarians] can do ; and we feel compelled to say that we think we understand its real value much better than they do. We believe its divine origin, in the highest and strongest possible sense of the words, quite as firmly as they can ; and we think we perceive the intrinsic divinity of its character with incomparably more clearness than it can be discerned by those who, as it seems to us, have mistaken some of the grossest and worst errors for essential doctrines of the religion of God. . . . We are reproached with defection from that religion round which we have gathered in the day of its danger, and from which, we trust, persecution and death cannot divorce us. Unitarianism does not lead to infidelity. On the contrary, its excellence is that it fortifies faith. Unitarianism is Christianity stripped of those corrupt additions which shock reason and our moral feelings."

Not long after this Unitarianism was attacked by Professor Stuart as "*a system of religion differing in nothing important from refined Naturalism* ; as it banishes at once from Christianity all that is peculiar to it and elevates it above and distinguishes it from the religion of nature." To this attack it was answered, —

"It is not always, or most usually, that the same allegation is conveyed by the same word. Deism is the term by which our religious opinions have been most commonly stigmatized ; but *Naturalism* is the word now getting into use, being borrowed from the German divines, and employed by those who are in the habit of adopting their technical phraseology. . . . The assertion then stands plainly thus : *Unitarianism differs in nothing important from Nature*. Now we contend that they do differ most essentially, and at least in

one circumstance, if no more, of the very last importance ; which is, that *the former supposes a direct revelation*, and the latter does not. Could Professor Stuart be ignorant of this? That cannot be. Only one more question remains, — Does he really consider this circumstance of no importance? The Naturalist looks upon Christianity as an excellent body of maxims and laws, promulgated by an eminently wise and good man, but denies to the system any superior sanction, and to its author any supernatural commission, endowments, authority or power ; denies the miracles, the inspired wisdom, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus Christ. The Unitarian believes that the One Eternal God sent his well-beloved Son to redeem a world from the bondage of sin ; that he imparted to him of his own wisdom to pierce the shades of futurity, and of his own power to still the storm and calm the sea, to rebuke disease and to vanquish death, thereby to prove to men that his mission, his doctrines and his precepts were divine, that his words were the words of Everlasting Truth, that his authority was the authority of God himself."

In the year 1825, the American Unitarian Association was formed, and its Executive Committee issued a brief exposition of the objects it was designed to promote.

"They wish it to be understood that, in accordance with the second article of the Constitution, its efforts will be directed to the promotion of true religion throughout our country ; intending by this, not exclusively those views which distinguish the friends of this Association from other disciples of Jesus Christ, but those views in connection with the great doctrines and principles in which all Christians coincide, and which constitute the substance of our religion. We wish to diffuse the knowledge and influence of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour."

This circular was signed by James Walker, Henry Ware, Jr., Samuel Barrett, Lewis Tappan, E. S. Gannett,

Upon this basis, and in this spirit, the Unitarian denomination rapidly advanced from weakness to strength. For several years its harmony was unbroken, although German rationalism, about the year 1830, began to show itself under the able and brilliant interpretations of Brownson, Emerson, and Ripley. It excited, however, but little opposition until it culminated, ten years later, in Theodore Parker. Then

began a ferment which continued to agitate the Unitarian body at its periodical gatherings until 1853; when the American Unitarian Association deemed it necessary to adopt a Report, setting forth in detail *its theological position and defining its policy*. As late as the year 1853, then, it was not regarded as contrary to "the historical position" of the Unitarian body, nor to its "great principle of freedom" for the American Unitarian Association to adopt a "Statement of Belief" that implicitly disowned those very opinions which the present New Policy "countenances." The statement affirms that —

"We believe in the unity and in the paternal character and merciful government of God ;

"In the absolute perfection of the one living, the only wise and true God ;

"In the omniscient scrutiny of his providence, the unspeakable nearness of his Spirit as the medium of revelation and element of eternal life ;

"In the supernatural authority of Christ as a Teacher, in his divine mission as a Redeemer, in his moral perfection as an example ; and

"In the Scriptures as containing the recorded history of the promulgation of a revelation."

It embraces other topics of interest, but these are the principal ones. Our readers should understand the circumstances which drove the Association to the adoption of a Statement of Belief as guiding its policy. They are precisely such as exist at this day. As a preface to its statement the Report says that —

"One of the chief clogs impeding our numerical advance, . . . has been what is considered the excessive radicalism and irreverence of some who have nominally stood within our own circle, and who have been considered by the public as representing our household of faith. They have seemed to treat the holy oracles and the endeared forms of our common religion with contempt. *They have offensively assailed and denied all traces of the supernatural in the history of Christianity* and in the life of its august Founder. In this way, shocking many pious hearts, and alarming many sensitive

minds, they have brought an unwarrantable and injurious suspicion and prejudice against the men and views that stood in apparent support of them and theirs ; and have caused an influential reaction of fear against liberal opinions in theology. It seems to us that the time has arrived when, by a proclamation of our general thought on this matter, we should relieve ourselves from the embarrassments with which we, as a body, are thus unjustly entangled by the peculiarities of a few, and those few not all belonging to us."

The Report goes on to say, as if with prescience of the present state of things : The real facts in the case, as well as due regard for the interests of truth, require us, in the most emphatic manner, to disavow any endorsement of that view, which utterly denies the supernatural in Christianity. We desire, *in a denominational capacity*, to assert our profound belief in the Divine origin, the Divine authority, the Divine sanctions of the religion of Jesus Christ. **THIS IS THE BASIS OF OUR ASSOCIATED ACTION.**" The New Policy ignores this solemn affirmation, or rather aims to be "impartial" between it and "the excessive radicalism" which called it forth. In the Public Meeting held immediately after the adoption of this Report, the following resolution was proposed and spoken to with great power by Dr. Palfrey of Cambridge :—

*"Resolved, That the divine authority of the Gospel, as founded on a special and miraculous interposition of God for the redemption of mankind, is the basis of the action of this Association."*

The New Policy, on the contrary, tells us that "individual liberty" is its basis, and demands that the "countenance" of the Association be given to men who say, as an eminent preacher does in a late number of the "Liberal Christian,"—"What! not even say, with Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'? But who is certain that Peter ever said this, or that Jesus applauded the saying, as is recorded in the Gospels? No one is certain of it who knows anything about the way in which the Gospels were composed." Possibly the declaration of Dr. Hill, late President of Harvard University,—upon which my eye happens to fall at this

moment,— may be received as good authority on this point. "Taking up the evidence on this point," he says, "we find it conclusive. The four Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Epistles of several Apostles, are *are proved to be true histories and genuine letters*, by an amount of evidence that is perfectly overwhelming,— evidence of a character that is decisive."

An eminent scholar, writing in the "Christian Examiner" of 1852, says,— "The issue between Unitarians and Trinitarians concerns the meaning of records *whose authenticity and historical faithfulness both parties admit and maintain*; while the issue between believers and unbelievers in a revelation concerns the credibility and authority of those records."

But the New Policy proclaims "impartiality" between the parties to this last-named issue!

At a meeting of the Executive Committee, Dec. 12, 1853, to consider the importance of making an immediate effort to enlist the sympathies and strength of our denomination for the promotion of our views of the truth, it was urged that the present was a favorable time for such action because the position of the Association was more distinctly understood, on account of the Statement of Belief made in the Annual Report of that year. "That Statement," the Committee say, "shows the ground on which we stand. It is the ground on which, as a denomination, we have stood *from the beginning*,—that of a belief in the supernatural authority of Jesus Christ." And while they would do nothing to contravene their principles of toleration and charity, they declare that they acted from a profound conviction of duty in affirming "that we must not be identified with those who deny the divine origin of Christianity, and are seeking to undermine its claim to supernatural authority."

Let not our readers weary of these citations. They are of immense significance in respect to present differences and divergences. We go on, then, with our proof that the present Policy of the Secretary is *New*.

In the month of January, 1854, the President and Secretary, in behalf of the Executive Committee, issued a call for a special meeting of the American Unitarian Association, in



which they say,—"The last Annual Report, in which an explicit statement of faith was made, will show the position in which the Executive Committee have aimed to place the Association, and the great Christian ideas and principles to the diffusion of which they wish to direct its efforts."

At the meeting held pursuant to this call, the President of the Association read a very able paper, in which, referring to its publications, he says, —

"The theology of these tracts rests upon the Bible, as the Word of God, 'the law and the testimony' to which all go as the rule of faith and the great source of truth. It rests upon and upholds the authority of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, as the supernaturally endowed and commissioned Redeemer and Saviour of the world; and the volumes breathe throughout a spirit of reverence, faith and love towards him. . . . One of the greatest perils of our time is from that spirit of skepticism abroad in the world which would undermine the supernatural origin and divine authority of Jesus Christ. It is the great infidel feature of the nineteenth century, reappearing, more or less, in all denominations,—the result, in part, of a sort of deification of the physical laws of the universe, and in part also of the unsound claims made by criticism and theology. . . . It is to furnish a barrier against the growing skeptical spirit; it is to clear up doubts which will make shipwreck of the faith of many; it is to present a basis which the enlightened mind may receive and which the loving heart may lean upon and revere; in one word, it is *to save our common Christianity*, and to save our children and our country from the blighting curse of unbelief, that we are called to do our part for the diffusion of light and truth, doing it agreeably to our convictions, and in our own methods and ways."

At the next Annual Meeting, the Report observes, that —

"It was deemed advisable, on account of suspicions having arisen of the soundness of our faith because we had not excommunicated those amongst us who had discredited the miracles of the New Testament and brought in question the divine authority of the Christian religion, and we were therefore regarded as concealed infidels, it was regarded advisable," it said, "in the last Annual Report to make a declaration of belief in the divine origin of the

Gospel, and in the supernatural authority of Christ as a messenger of God's truth and grace to man. We regarded this belief as *the indispensable basis* on which a distinctively Christian denomination must stand, apart from which Christian precepts have no sanction, Christian hopes no assurance, Christian promises no power, and in the place of a vital and historic force in the world, we substitute nothing but a name. . . . During the year," the Report goes on to say, "we have heard many speak of that declaration of belief in tones of entire and hearty approval. They rejoiced to see an AFFIRMATION. The exigencies of our position called for it. It was indeed a simple thing, and no more than was before in all their hearts and on all their tongues. *But they wanted to have it uttered by our united voice.* They wanted it should be proclaimed by the largest Association known in our body. They wanted it inscribed on the highest banner that floats over our head. . . . We here proclaim again," it declares, "the AFFIRMATION which we made a year ago, that our belief is a belief in the divinity of the mission of the Son of God, in Christianity as a special divine revelation, supernaturally communicated and authenticated to mankind. We place our hands on the Scriptures, and we say, here is a voice from heaven; here is a light from God on the path of life; here is authority higher than man's on the question of man's duty and destiny, the way of his peace and the hope of his eternal life."

We are not aware that these solemn proceedings have ever been annulled or even modified by any action of the Association. Indeed we are sure that they have not been. Certainly it could not have been done under the Presidency of Dr. Stebbins,—the predecessor of Mr. Lowe in the duties of his office. For Dr. Stebbins distinctly announced in all his addresses, whilst engaged in raising the one hundred thousand dollars for the Association in the year 1865,—by far the largest sum ever raised in any year (raised, be it remembered to the honor of Dr. Stebbins, under the old and not the new policy),—that "*the Gospel of Christ was our basis of action*," and that "we labored to spread Christianity in its simplicity and power as distinguished from all philosophies," &c. Look also at this fact: At the Annual Meeting of 1867 a resolution was introduced by the Rev. Mr. Towne:—

"That young men and women, moved by an earnest and pure spirit of devotion to truth, love and holiness, ought to be made welcome to the privileges of our schools and to all the opportunities of our ministry, *without reference to the opinions which, in the exercise of a good conscience towards God and towards man, they may wish to hold and teach.*"

The resolution was supported by the mover and the Rev. J. T. Sargent, and opposed with warmth and power by Drs. Laird Collier and C. Palfrey. This was a tentative effort looking to a new policy. Remember the year,—1867. Hon. S. Padelford (Governor of Rhode Island), then Vice-President of the Association, remarked that, "For one, rather than have a church without a Bible, and a Christianity without Christ, I prefer to turn round the circle and join our orthodox brethren who preach nothing but Christ and him crucified." He concluded by moving that the subject be laid on the table. And the motion prevailed. Thus ended the first and, as far as we know, the only open attempt to change the original and settled policy of the Association until the recent *coup d'état* of the Secretary.

Here, as the lawyers say, "we rest our case." Our task has been no pastime in these hot days. One thought, one alone, which we are not ashamed to expose to the scrutiny of the Great Judge, has carried us through it. Our one burden in it has been the necessity for it; our chief sorrow, as it touches any personal relations, that we have not been able to sustain our earnest and devoted Secretary in what he deems to be his official duty. To the Unitarian churches, to fathers and mothers of "like precious faith" with us, to all who believe in Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we commit our cause,—which is also theirs,—asking in its behalf the prayers of fellow-christians of every name, and invoking upon it, as He sees it to be the cause of truth, the blessing of Almighty God.

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The soul is nursed for heaven by the discipline of a sacred sorrow.

## THE IMPENDING CONFLICT OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY A. D. MAYO.

THERE seems, just now, a growing conviction that the Liberal Christianity of the United States, putting by a large class of interesting questions of philosophical and scientific importance, should turn to the condition of the American people, and find a practical basis of religious activity. That basis seems to have appeared in a gathering public opinion that *it is utterly useless to attempt to elevate the religious character of men and States by any system of faith and appliances outside of Christianity as set forth in the person and gospel of Jesus Christ.* And there it joins issue with the whole world outside Christendom.

And there, sooner than we may think, even now, Christendom itself will be forced to stand and meet the great host of its enemies, gathering from the four corners of the earth, for a final test of strength. Such a test has never yet come to it. There was no such test even in the primitive church. For a while the pure Christianity of Jesus Christ did resist the onslaught of Jew and Pagan through the great Roman Empire. It was found afterwards that this simple religion of love to God and man, founded on the life of the divine man, Jesus Christ, was too lofty for the comprehension of any large number of men in that age of ignorance and superstition. A compromise providentially grew up in which the Roman Empire itself made a God of Jesus, and blended Christian and Pagan elements of belief and ritual in what afterwards became the two great Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. In this partial and corrupted form Christianity fashioned the civilized nations of the modern world, and drove all hostile religions within the pale of the semi-civilized, barbarous, and savage nations and peoples. Three hundred years ago the Catholic Church was rent in twain, and the Protestant Chris-

tian Church, professing the creed of the deity of Christ and "the sacrificial plan," but asserting the right of private judgment of the Bible as its fundamental basis, has confined all more despotic forms of Christianity to those countries where constitutional liberty is not firmly established in the state. The energies of these three great divisions, the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant, for three hundred years have been greatly monopolized by the triangular conflict among each other. So the final war of opinion, that shall set all Christendom on one side and all the hostile elements united on the other, to fight out the world's grand battle for a religion for mankind, has not yet been waged.

There is every reason to believe that battle-field is to be the same where the final conflict between the people and all their self-elected rulers was lately decided. Our great war was not so much a war to abolish slavery or suppress rebellion, as to settle the question whether an aristocracy, backed by all the aristocracies and monarchies of the world, should overcome the deliberate will of the people. Now there impends a mightier war than that in this republic,—*the decision of the question, shall this American people be Christian in its religion?* This contest is all the mightier because it cannot be decided by civil war or appeal to arms. It can only be waged in the realm of ideas; it can only be decided by working conviction upon the souls of the people. It is more important than the late war, for it goes down to the springs of human life, the motives and intentions of man, and will decide *what use the people of the United States, and finally mankind, will make of that liberty which is the glory of the present age.* For, give to this American people all outward and inward gifts,—boundless wealth, free government, more than imperial power in the world, perfect freedom of thought, universal human suffrage, even the highest possible culture of the whole people,—the thing supremely important, almost the only thing a wise man cares to know is, *how will this people use this power?* Will it be a religious or a godless people? Will it take to its heart the central principle of love to God and love to man, as embodied in the gospel and life of Christ,

and use all these things in this interest? Will it try to use these opportunities on the plan of atheistic negation of all religion? Will it cast off from Christian moorings, and go out as a people on an exploring expedition in search of a new religion and a hitherto undiscovered God?

There is no country so adapted to be the battle-ground of this impending conflict as this republic. For here is no state church, and the right of belief or unbelief is legally secured to every citizen. The right of free discussion of religion and all kindred topics, as of all worship that does not trench on morality, is secured by law. The state confesses its obligation to obey God and love man, but stops short of any sectarian religious profession. The American people is the most intelligent and most deeply interested in great religious questions of any in the world. Here the battle is to be fought for mankind. Just as, ten years ago, we shouldered the musket to decide whether the whole people shall rule, to the exclusion of all other methods of government, so we are now to gird ourselves up to the mightier and more prolonged conflict of opinions to decide whether the simple and sublime religion of love to God and man, embodied in the person and gospel of Christ, shall become the final religion of civilized mankind.

Let us review the Antichristian host that is now massing itself for this grand national conflict of opinion.

I. We behold a considerable body of avowed, and a much larger number of non-professing, atheists. These are of two sorts. The one is found chiefly among cultivated men of science, or men exclusively engaged in material pursuits. They are materialists, and deny the existence of spirit altogether, believing that what we call "soul" is only a temporary result of some peculiar combination of matter. Larger than this is the party of spiritual atheists, or pantheists, — people who believe in a universal soul that only comes to self-consciousness in man; who deny the personality of God or an eternal conscious existence of the soul; and, if they worship at all, pay homage to a universal unconscious spirit or an idealized Humanity. Of course, both these classes install

Fate, or immutable law, in place of the law of love, in human affairs; and, as far as men in such a country as this can, seek to live up to their atheistic creed. The materialistic leaders are found chiefly among the scientific, medical, and mechanical classes; the pantheists among the *litterati* and the Radical religious clergy.

Then comes a far greater corps of people who believe in God and religion, but deny the claim of Christianity to any kind of authority or permanent superiority. The Hebrews are a large and increasing body in the United States, and their "Reformed" branch is as near the simplest form of Christianity as it can be without the recognition of Jesus Christ. A considerable portion of the "Spiritualists" openly repudiate Christianity, and proclaim a new revelation through the agency of disembodied spirits; and some of the leaders seem to have lost sight of God and the everlasting moralities amid the blaze of a shower of meteors from the spiritual world. A very respectable body of influential people in private and public life have yet found no form of Christianity they can believe; and, while they permit themselves to be claimed by this or that Christian church, really are deists; critics of the character and gospel, possibly doubters of the historical reality, of Jesus Christ. There is a very numerous class of cultivated young people who have become interested in philosophical, artistic, or literary pursuits to the point that they have lost faith in the Christian, and lost interest in any religion; who are living in the idea that mental or artistic life is sufficient for all human needs. All these classes, except the Jews, generally repudiate any pecuniary or social obligation to Christian institutions; seldom go inside a church, indeed doubt if the church is to be a permanent American institution. There are teachers of various forms of unchristian religion that attempt to found societies on their faith, but there is little permanence in their organizations; and, so far, a church in America seems impossible without Christianity.

But the most formidable division of the Antichristian host is the increasing multitude of people, in all conditions of life,



who are living with no reference to any religion. Any observer of society must be struck, in modern nations, by this vast crowd of people who are living literally "without God in the world." They may be day-laborers or statesmen, rich or poor, refined or vulgar, educated or ignorant; but they all seem to have left out religion in their estimates of life. Some of them are scoffers, immoral, reprobate. Many are not different in outward things from respectable people of religious tendencies. There is doubtless a large body of people who are not religious in their life, but believe in Christianity, and can be moved by appeals to their latent faith. But this class does not acknowledge any obligation to Christianity at all, rarely puts itself in the way of any religious influence, and resents any strong appeal or claim by religion as an impertinent interference with private rights.

Now here is a force which we shall be prudent not to despise,—this combination of all the Antichristian people of the republic. Nobody knows how large numerically the force is. It may be greatly in the minority; but its influence is prodigious, and rapidly increasing in American society. A few thousand slaveholders held liberty at bay for seventy-five years, and cost the country half a million lives and billions of treasure,—almost the disruption of the republic. There are Antichristian people enough in the United States to plunge this people into a conflict of principles outlasting our lives and imperiling every American institution, even the existence of the republic with its present ideas. Even now, when this body unites on any test practical question, such as the religious or irreligious observance of Sunday, or the expulsion of religion from the public schools, it is strong enough, with occasional sectarian allies, to carry its point. In Cincinnati the whole execution of state and city laws against selling liquor is prevented, and to-day twenty-five hundred places are open for vending this fruitful source of crime and death. No Board of Education in any American city ever yet, to my knowledge, declared, as that of Cincinnati has done, that "religious instruction," "reading religious books," and religious music shall be banished from the public schools. For

our contest over religion in the Cincinnati schools does not exclusively or chiefly hinge on the propriety of excluding the Bible, but on the broader and far more radical proposition that there should be "no religious instruction," "reading religious books," "appropriate," i.e., religious singing; a proposition that, logically carried out, will make our schools atheistic. And on this ground, *the exclusion of any recognition of religion from public schools*, this battle must everywhere be fought out.

The same thing can be done in two-thirds the large cities of the United States. And the alarming feature of this matter is the bold, aggressive front the Antichristian host puts on in any such contest. It assails Christianity and the New Testament as immoral and antiquated; declares that the "cultivated mind" of the world has repudiated it; sneers at the classes of people who stand up for Christianity as below a wise man's notice, or ferociously denounces them as enemies of public liberty, and quietly puts off the clergy and church in a corner, as if they have no business to a hearing in a great public moral question. Indeed, it openly asserts that morality has no relation to religion, but is founded in a private intuition or the custom of the community. It is rapidly getting to be a disadvantage among large circles of people to be a believer in Christianity. It will be a great advantage if this aggressive attitude calls Christendom to its senses, and teaches it that its foe is upon it in such strength that it may well cease all its internal contentions and close up to the grand battle for the possession of the republic.

We need not suppose the main attack will at first be directed against the Christian church. The preliminary conflict, in the United States, will be waged in the neutral field of public life. Our fathers established the government of the United States on the confession that "*man is endowed by his Creator*" with all the human rights, and government is established to secure their observance among men. Every government, every national and state institution, has hitherto recognized this primary religious obligation of the citizen and the government to worship God and do good to man.

This granted, American society builds up a perfect wall of protection against abuse of that recognition, guarding the rights of conscience in every man, and forbidding the government to favor any sectarian party in the state. *Now the whole Antichristian host is consolidating to put this recognition of God and the religious obligation of public morality out of our entire circle of public life.* It declares it is an infringement on the liberty of conscience to recognize God at all in the state, or enforce a morality that has a religious sanction. It begins with public education, and declares that shall be wholly secular — not so much as recognizing the Supreme Being. Then it will go on to the State; put out all recognition of Almighty God from the United States and State constitutions; abolish prayers in the legislature, courts, congress, public institutions; sweep away chaplains from army and navy; suppress thanksgiving and fast days; abolish the oath of office, and wholly secularize all public life. This, if done, will be the same as building a superb steamer and then drying up the ocean on which it was made to float. The ocean underneath American society is the fathomless, all-embracing, all-surrounding, people's faith in their obligation to God and man. There is the source of all human rights, the assurance of all human liberty. Take that from under our nation, and this nation is aground on the sand-bar of atheism, a prey to the political and social "wreckers" of the whole earth.

When this time has come, the attack will be directed against American society itself, as far as it recognizes the religious obligation to love God and man. For this obligation is essentially Christian, love to God and man being the soul of Christianity. The family will be emptied of its sanctity, and marriage be made a purely social or civil bargain, dissolved at the will of the partners. Childhood will be educated only to live in this life, trained for purely material ends. The right of society to suppress public immorality will be taken away, and any man will violate decency and order who cares to plead his rights. So we shall come to that day when our people, like multitudes in the old world, will live alone to work for money and plunge into pleasure at every interval of

toil. And when that ideal of life is attained which prevails so largely in continental Europe, we shall have a people that will submit to a military government, and one more republic will go out in the night of a godless and fatalistic imperialism.

Up to this point the Antichristian host expect the powerful aid of the Catholic priesthood. This priesthood wants to do all these things as half its programme. The priests desire to abolish Protestant Christianity from American society, knowing that man cannot live without religion in his public life, and believing, as a choice between atheism and Romanism, America will choose the latter. And a small body of deluded people in all Christian churches are so eager to save some chimerical right of conscience, that they are willing to make the state and American society neutral in religion (which is atheistic), forgetting that when this is done man will rise and demand a religion, and will take that which claims the most positive authority over his whole life. So does the Antichristian army now work by dividing the Christian body and conquering in detail.

All this is only preliminary to a direct attack on the Christian church itself. When Antichrist has secured the vast field of American public life, society, business, fashion, journalism, for a base of operations, i.e., re-paganized American society, it will crowd the Christian church off in a corner, torture it with disabilities, and make it like the primitive church,—like the church in Pagan and Mohammedan countries, a suppliant for existence. Then the Christian religion will be superseded, and the civilized nations be ‘given up to delusion to believe a lie.’ You may think this a chimerical horoscope. It is just what all the “thinking men” in the Antichristian host are planning to do; what they are beginning to accomplish even in the great cities of America today. We can be blind and confident as we may; but the hour will come when a new call will be made to the American people to save the Christian religion. God grant it will not then be too late to save it without an appeal to arms.

I do not believe this unholy attempt will succeed, though I

see before us a long, bitter, variable contest of public opinion interspersed with episodes of popular violence, before we are at the end. The end will come just as it did in the late war. When the majority of the people fully understood that republican institutions were at stake, they forgot their differences, closed up, destroyed aristocracy, and reconstructed the government on the basis of the rights of all men. As soon as the great Christian sects can see that not one "ism" or church, but the Christian religion itself, is assailed in America by a powerful and crafty foe, they will put by their old quarrels and stand man to man in defense of the sole hope of the human race. The Catholic and the Quaker, the Reformed Jew and the Churchman, the Rationalist and the Ritualist, — every man who believes religion means what Jesus said it did, — love to God and man, — will in the last emergency unite to resist this oncoming of the powers of darkness. But they cannot unite on an infallible church, as the Catholic priesthood profess. They cannot unite on an elaborate, infallible creed, as the evangelical body has so long attempted. They can unite on the Liberal Christian platform, — that laid down in our National Conference, — the simple faith in Christ's religion of love to God and man, and the consecration of every good man and woman to build up Christ's kingdom of love on earth. When that day comes, the grand army of the Lord will move irresistibly and regenerate mankind, by the might of Christ's gospel bringing "peace on earth and good will to man."

I see already many signs of the gathering together of the Christian host in anticipation of that decisive day.

The Catholic Church is really the only one in this country that stands out. Its priesthood is yet ridden with the old European notion of its divine right to govern both the government and people of the United States. The Catholic bishops will finally submit to the papal party and help consolidate the priestly power at Rome. They will come back and find American society a wall of brass against that absurd pretension. Why! the people that put negro slavery into the sea, and suppressed the most powerful aristocracy on

earth in five years, bow down to a weak old man at Rome, and call a set of foreign bachelor priests the only representatives of God in this republic! The men who undertake to do that have taken a contract they don't understand. The Catholic people, within twenty years, as soon as a new generation of American Catholic citizens gets on its feet, will attend to that claim, and, even at the risk of breaking with the European church, will force a lay element into American Catholicism, and insist that this antiquated nonsense of infallibility shall be abandoned. The American Catholic Church is destined to a great reformation, and when the day of battle for the Christian religion comes will be found in line, not the least faithful and efficient corps of the army of the Lord.

The Protestant Evangelical Church is organizing anew for this emergency. Its grandest sect, the Methodists, have opened the door to lay membership, and so ensured the progress of its noble body. The Presbyterians have ceased to be "schools," and are a "united" church. The Episcopal Church will slough off its ritualistic priesthood, and become a progressive Christian body. All these sects are now uniting in the Young Men's Christian Association, which retains only one trace of bigotry, the forbidding any man not an "evangelical" to hold office in its association. That blot on its scutcheon will disappear, and then Liberal Christianity will be in line with Evangelicism on the great day. I rejoice to see a new church rising in an American city, Catholic or Reformed Hebrew, Unitarian or Methodist, — whatever it be, if it is headed towards Jesus Christ. The day will come when it will be compelled to step forth and take its place under the banner of love to God and man, and be led by "the Captain of our salvation" to the victory over sin and error, — to the possession of the world.

Meanwhile, let every Christian church be sure it keeps itself Christian in thought, in word, and especially in deed. Many people nowadays seem to think the Christian name a poor trifle not worth insisting on. It is to religion in America what honor is to man, what chastity is to woman. We may be indifferent to it while we have it: once lost, life goes down

into an abyss of doubt and spiritual eclipse from which the only way out is through the mercy of God. Let every church remember that now is the time to consecrate itself anew to the work of Christ. Let Christians pledge their talents, their influence, their property, their lives, to the cause of Christ's kingdom. Is that a hard saying? Will it be any advantage to any man or woman in America to be rich, or learned, or famous, or fashionable, if atheism and ungodliness conquer the land, and society itself reels in a drunken debauch of rebellion against God? Let every Christian man and woman choose a place in a church, train their children up therein, work, pray, pay for it, — cast all influence on its side.

Especially, let every Liberal Christian believer at once ally himself to a Liberal Christian Church, and do all he can in its behalf. God has called us to choose the field on which this grand conflict shall be decided. He has placed us out on the skirmish line, where we first encounter the foe. If we sleep on our post, if we break rank and fly or desert to the enemy, the battle will not be lost; but we shall disappear forever from the great field when man's destiny is saved by glorious warfare, and some eager aspirant for the leadership will take our place. What an opportunity is now ours, — to stand next to our Commander, the Lord Jesus Christ, in that great day when the powers of Antichrist shall be scattered, and the flaming banners in the sunset sky wave in the sweet twilight of peace on earth and the sunrise of love upon a world consecrated forever to the infinite goodness of the Almighty God!

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AND then we begin to feel the rest, the unutterable rest, of knowing that this whole life of ours, whether we will it so or not, is a plan of God; that the tidal wave of human destiny ebbs and flows in obedience to laws as benign as those that gird the earth's blue waters and fix their bounds. And above all these shifting aims and purposes of ours, these longing and vain outreaching desires, is a voice loving as it is omnipotent, which says to each one of them, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther." — *De Wette*.



## CHARLES DICKENS.

BY J. H. MORISON.

WE propose to speak of this great writer principally as a moral and religious teacher. The most important influences which act upon us come partly from unseen sources, and partly from living men and women. In the mind of Jesus there seems to have been no sharp line of separation between this visible world of human beings and the spiritual world by which it is encompassed. His followers who entered most entirely into his thought looked on all God's agents for the improvement of the race, whether seen or unseen, as belonging to the same great communion of ministering spirits. The law "was ordained by angels." Prophets and lawgivers, sages with messages of profound wisdom, inspired poets, whose song, as in the Book of Ecclesiastes, is like the wail of an autumn wind over the vanity of earthly ambition, and the grander poets, who hold up before us loftier and holier visions of life to elevate and refresh us, were all regarded as ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

In the New Testament, principles of eternal life are revealed which will last as long as the world shall stand or human hearts shall feel. But those great principles of love to God and man are applied by the faithful and gifted spirits of each age to its peculiar circumstances and wants. The living preachers of each new generation, entering into the spirit of the world around them, and, through their sympathy with it, feeling its wants, bring to their contemporaries from the fountain of divine truth what is most essential to them, in the way by which they can best gain access to them, and help them to a better life. These teachings, brought home to individual minds, prepare them for the removal of old wrongs, for higher institutions and laws, and thus gradually lift up the race into a higher civilization. The great thinkers unfolding new truths, the great poets opening new visions of

ideal goodness and beauty, the great preachers appealing to the fears and hopes of men and giving a new impulse to the religious influences at work in the world, the great moralists urging severer rules of practical duty, and as social reformers applying those rules to the specific wants of the age, all are ministers of God, sent forth to do his work and to establish his kingdom in the world.

Every age has its peculiar mode of instruction, its peculiar methods by which to bring home God's truth to the souls of his children. Before the art of printing, oral instruction, especially in the church and in schools of learning, was the great means of intellectual and religious communication. Since then the printed page has taken its place, and he who hopes to produce any great influence on the thought of the age must do it through the pen. Each generation still must have its own living teachers. The ablest works of the past do not meet the vital emergencies of the present hour. They may furnish storehouses of wisdom from which living thinkers may enrich and educate their minds. But new phases of thought, new forms of expression, and all the subtle feelings which connect a living man with the living minds at work around him, are needed always to meet the wants of society.

One of the peculiarities of the present century has been the extent to which fictitious writings have been used as the vehicle of almost every sort of influence and instruction. Under the thin disguise of a story, through the slighter texture of its narrative, the occasion has been sought to present all sorts of views on almost every subject, and to reach the innermost recesses of our nature through the emotions and through all our most delicate, susceptible and powerful feelings. It is idle to attempt to ignore or undervalue the influence, both for good and for evil, of this class of writers. Where a preacher addresses a hundred, or at the utmost two or three thousand hearers, the great novelist addresses hundreds of thousands. He follows them to their homes. He takes them in their most unguarded moments. He enters into their secret thoughts. He mingles with them in their most passionate emotions. He throws over them the spell of

his own spirit, and leads them whithersoever he will. He is admitted to the confidence of the young. He moulds their pliant affections, colors their inmost sentiments and their secret views and purposes of life.

One of the greatest of these writers has just passed away. No one, by the magic of his genius, has ever, during his lifetime, reached more hearts, or been accepted as a benefactor and personal friend in more homes. He has lightened our cares. He has made us weep. He has caused our tears to sparkle in the light of his gladness. He has thrilled us by examples of self-sacrificing love. He has appalled us by pictures of suffering and crime. He has awakened our indignation and wrath by the exposure of established wrongs. He has brought us, in the impulse of our deepest sympathies, to unite with him in the solemn determination that such cruel practices shall no longer have a place among civilized and Christian men. More than any other writer living or dead, he has shown to us the tortures to which young children have been subjected by evil institutions, by mistaken ideas of education, by avarice and selfishness or pride on the part of parents and teachers. And no man in our generation, perhaps, has done so much to soften these hardships and direct men's thoughts to more reasonable and Christian methods of culture. Thousands of abuses, through the exposures of his pen, have vanished from the earth. In these respects he has done a work which any Christian might think of on his death-bed with thankfulness and comfort.

But he has done more and greater things than this. He has made real to us a higher and better ideal of life. The creations of his genius, the beings to whom he has introduced us, and who live in our thoughts and our hearts, are not they also ministering spirits? Children, examples of purity and patience, and of a trust which never could be shaken,—some dying early, to whom the gates of heaven opened easily, and some living to carry into life all the sweet charities and affections and faith, which, blossoming in their childhood, bear afterwards the peaceable and gracious fruits of loving and faithful lives. Generous men, of pure hearts and

unspotted lives, loving to spend and be spent, throwing aside the restraints of a selfish prudence, and never so happy as in promoting the happiness of others. Young hearts in the heyday of hope and love, yet never seeking or hoping to find any true satisfaction or enjoyment except in truth and kindness. These gracious and moving examples he has furnished for us all.

Indeed, I know not where we may find grander lessons of truthfulness and honor, or of manliness in all its generous anticipations and purposes and acts. We see here no disappointment secretly embittering the heart of a good man, and making him feel in his later experience as if his honesty and nobleness had been all a waste or an illusion. Forms, too, there are of womanly intelligence and loveliness, in almost every walk of life, making physical beauty holy, and virtue and religion beautiful. Witness, as one out of fifty examples, the feelings of the little brother as he looked at his sister seated at the piano.

"When he saw her sitting there alone, so young, and good, and beautiful, and kind to him, and heard her thrilling voice, so natural and sweet, and such a golden link between him and all his life's love and happiness, rising out of the silence, he turned his face away and hid his tears."

Here, more than in almost any other writer, man is raised above his surroundings. When the self-sufficient rich man is endeavoring to impress his son with a sense of his own selfish importance by saying that money is a good thing and can do anything, how is his pride rebuked and overthrown by the childish reply, "If it is a good thing, and can do anything, I wonder why it did not save me my mamma."

No writer has done more to make crime hideous and awful. Take his account, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," of a murderer.

"What had he left in the wood, that he sprang out of it as if it were a hell? The body of a murdered man. In one thick, solitary spot, it lay among the last year's leaves of oak and beech, just as it had fallen headlong down. Sopping and soaking in among the

leaves that formed its pillow ; oozing down into the boggy ground, as if to cover itself from human sight ; forcing its way between and through the curling leaves, as if those senseless things rejected and forswore it, and were coiled up in abhorrence, — went a dark, dark stain that dyed the whole summer night from earth to heaven.”

Shakespeare is hardly more awful. Indeed, it calls to our mind the fearful retributions which we read of in the Bible.

But while he shows sin in its hideous realities, he shows us that there is no form of sin, except perhaps a hardened case of hypocrisy, which cannot be forsaken and forgiven ; and in this he follows, however modestly and far behind, in the footsteps of him who came to redeem and sanctify the world. He shows us the proud, hardened, revengeful woman, under the influence of kindness coming to herself at last. She lies before us, weak and helpless, exciting only our compassion and our sorrow. “Scorn, rage, defiance, recklessness, look here ! This is the end.” He shows us the proud, selfish man, a wreck in fortune and in health, coming also to himself, with affections new born through persistence and prayer, as he lifts up his eyes, and, with heart-broken grief, exclaims, “Oh, my God ! forgive me, for I need it very much.”

But the time would fail me to enumerate all the instances of redeeming love and goodness which are here placed before us. One example may serve to show us his spirit and his method in the treatment of those who are regarded as the most obdurate and hopeless of all, the lost ones, whom we perhaps would leave to perish, but whom he would have us arrest in their sin and wretchedness, and bring back, as Jesus has taught us to do. May I give you the picture as he has left it for us of a poor, sinful, degraded woman, and of the kind, suffering, Christian soul who rescued and saved her ? This good woman, pleading for a brother who had done a great wrong, had just been saying, —

“Oh, sir ! after what I have seen, let me conjure you, if you are in any place of power, and are ever wronged, never, for any wrong, inflict a punishment that cannot be recalled ; while there is a God above us to work changes in the hearts he made.”

The place is in the vicinity of London.

"The rain fell heavily ; and a dark mist, drooping over the distant town, hid it from the view. The chill wind was howling, and the day was darkening moodily, when Harriet, raising her eyes from the work on which she had long since been engaged, saw one of these travelers approaching. A woman. A solitary woman, of some thirty years of age, tall, well-formed, handsome, miserably dressed, the soil of many country roads in varied weather—dust, chalk, clay, gravel—clotted on her gray cloak by the streaming wet ; no bonnet on her head, nothing to defend her rich black hair from the rain but a torn handkerchief. As her hands, parting on her sunburnt forehead, swept across her face, there was a reckless and regardless beauty in it ; a dauntless and depraved indifference to more than weather ; a carelessness of what was cast upon her bare head from heaven or earth ; that, coupled with her misery and loneliness, touched the heart of her fellow-woman. She thought of all that was perverted and debased within her, no less than without ; of the modest graces of the mind, hardened and steeled, like these attractions of the person ; of the many gifts of the Creator flung to the winds like the wild hair ; of all the beautiful ruin upon which the storm was beating and the night was coming.

"Thinking of this, she did not turn away with a delicate indignation,—too many of her own compassionate sex too often do. She pitied her. She asked her to come in, and helped her to bind up her bruised and bleeding foot. The woman caught her arm, and, drawing it before her own eyes, hid them against it and wept. 'Have you been far?'—'Very far. Months upon months over the sea, and far away even then. I have been where convicts go,' she added, looking full upon her entertainer. 'I have been one myself.'—'Heaven help you and forgive you,' was the gentle answer. 'Ah! Heaven help me and forgive me!' she returned, nodding her head at the fire. 'If man would help some of us a little more, God would forgive us all the sooner, perhaps.'"

The feelings of the wretched woman had been touched. With tears of grateful emotion she acknowledged the kindness,—

"And then was gone. Gone into the deepening night, and howling wind, and pelting rain ; urging her way on towards the mist-

enshrouded city where the blurred lights gleamed ; and with her black hair and disordered head-gear fluttering round her reckless face. Still there shone through all her way-worn misery and fatigue a ray of the departed radiance of the fallen angel."

Here is the first interview. Let us now witness the last.

"Harriet had sat down by the bedside now, and put her hand on the thin hand lying there. 'You are better?'—'It matters very little,' said Alice, with a faint smile. 'Better or worse to-day is but a day's difference, perhaps not so much. . . . Evil courses, and remorse, travel, want, and weather, storm within and storm without, have worn my life away. It will not last much longer. . . . I lie here, sometimes, thinking I should like to live until I had a little time to show you how grateful I could be! It is a weakness, and soon passes. Better for you as it is. Better for me! . . . Will you read to me a little more?' Harriet was withdrawing her hand to open the book, when Alice detained it for a moment. 'You will not forget my mother?'—'Never, Alice.'—'A moment yet. Lay my head so, dear, that I may see the words in your kind face.'

"Harriet complied, and read—read the eternal book for all the weary and the heavy laden, for all the wretched, fallen, and neglected of this earth—read the blessed history, in which the blind, lame, palsied beggar, the criminal, the woman stained with shame, the shunned of all our dainty clay, has each a portion that no human pride, indifference, or sophistry, through all the ages that this world shall last, can take away, or by the thousandth atom of a grain reduce,—read the ministry of Him, who, through the round of human life and all its hopes and griefs, from birth to death, from infancy to age, had sweet compassion for, and interest in, its every scene and stage, its every suffering and sorrow.

"'I shall come,' said Harriet, when she shut the book, 'very early in the morning.' The lustrous eyes, yet fixed upon her face, closed for a moment, then opened ; and Alice kissed and blessed her. The same eyes followed her to the door ; and in their light, and on the tranquil face, there was a smile when it was closed. They never turned away. She laid her hand upon her breast, murmuring the sacred name that had been read to her ; and life passed from her face like light removed."

This certainly is very solemn Christian teaching. These



ideal forms, so endowed with the mind of Jesus, come to us like his own words and acts, instinct with spirit and with life. Such creations as these are not merely parts of a sensational story, to fill up an idle hour and then vanish from us ; but they would bring to us, and impress upon us, lessons of Christian obligation, lessons of justice, mercy, charity, such as we may find in our Bibles if we read them as we ought. And if we have not read them as we ought, thoughts and feelings such as are here awakened in us may enable us to see in Jesus and his words a more awful majesty of divine truth, a more heavenly joy and beauty, than we have ever seen before.

And this man, this story-teller, who has so taught and so impressed us, so moved us by warnings and examples, is not he also to us a Christian teacher? He was a mortal man, with our human limitations and imperfections, intensely human even in the appetites and sensibilities which turn earthward. He made more account than a wise man should of eating and drinking, though even by these he would cherish our more kindly feelings and relations. His works are sometimes distorted by exaggerations which might well be spared. In the many volumes which he has written there are hundreds of pages which might be refined down into single drops of pure gold, and thus increase his chances for immortality. But through no refining process shall we come to a residuum of what is morally low or mean. I can recall no passage that could offend the most delicate sense of moral purity. No unworthy or unhealthy sentiments are encouraged by his example or his words.

He did not, I think, understand the full value of religious exercises, of Christian institutions and ordinances ; but the spirit and the life of Jesus are revealed to us in his works. He could not reach up high enough heavenward to light his lamp by the cold and passionless light of the stars. But God is as near to us here as in the stars. And the fire by which his lamp was kindled was none the less from heaven. Very sweetly it burns and fills the room, and gladdens human hearts, and lights them in their duties and their pleasures,

and makes home the abode of peaceful and joyous affections. Nay, in being so intensely human, was he not preparing the soul, which is created in the image of God, for what is heavenly and divine? Standing firmly on the earth, but not of the earth earthy,—a child of man, but awakening human souls to a sense of their boundless capabilities,—does he not also awaken them to a sense of the presence and the love of God? If an earthly training, is it not also a training for heaven,—using earthly instruments and teachers, indeed, but under divine influences, recognized and indicated rather than spoken of, but not therefore any the less a training for heaven?

When Goethe was asked what his purpose had been in writing "Faust," he was at a loss for an answer; but at last said, "From heaven, through earth, to hell—that surely is something." Alas for our human race, if that is all that the mightiest intellects of the world can do for us! The highest office of genius is to inspire and quicken, to reclaim and save, to guard and strengthen, to lead upward from earth to heaven, through all genial and blessed affections, through duties gladly done, through patience watching like an angel with suffering souls, and filling them with a sweet and holy peace, through prosperous years of well-doing, through evil days and sorrows, but with a heart unstained and unfaltering in its trust, through sickness and death, and not left there in darkness and desolation, but cheered at the moment of death by visions of dear ones in heaven and a diviner form.

"He put his hands together, as he had been used to do at his prayers." And as he was looking into a brighter world, he said to his sister, "'Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! But tell them that the print [of Jesus] on the stairs is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go.'"

"The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion,—Death!

"Oh thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean."

Well might the man who wrote these things, and so many others like them, say, modestly but very confidently, in reply to one who had calumniated and reproached him as unchristian, that he supposed he had studied "to inculcate some Christian lessons in books;" that he supposed he had "tried to turn a child or two tenderly toward the knowledge and love of our Saviour."

And shall we not thankfully accept him in this office?

It seems but a day since we first heard of this great writer. It was in the autumn of 1836 at Dr. Channing's in Rhode Island. As he was recovering from a severe illness, we endeavored to amuse him by reading to him some very poor attempts at wit. He spoke with regret of the lack of humorous writers, but said that he had recently read a book called "Sketches by Boz," which was said to be written by a young man, and which seemed to him to be a work of great promise. Soon after the "Pickwick Papers" came out, more than fulfilling the earlier promise. And, during the thirty-four years that have succeeded, what a succession of creations have come from him to enrich our daily experience. How much would be taken away from our mental resources, from the vivacity and joyousness of life, from our fairest and poorest chambers of imagery, from friendships second only to what we find in our own homes, if we should give up all that has come from him!

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It is good to made earth and ocean, winds and flames, sun and stars, tributary to our present well-being: how much better to make them minister to our spiritual wants, teachers of heavenly truth, guides to a more glorious Being than themselves, bonds of union between man and his maker!

# "WHERE IS THE CITY?"

BY W. P. TILDEN.

A BOOK was published some time since, in the "Ecce Homo" series, bearing the above title. Its association with that remarkable volume was unfortunate. Only a book of the very first quality could bear such company. But the volume is not without intrinsic worth. If in execution it be faulty, in thought and suggestiveness it is admirable. Its light, if not brilliant, is the light of the day-spring, not of the evening. It is a book for the times, furnishing no mean contribution to some of the most interesting questions of the hour.

The book professes to give the history of a young man, Israel Knights by name, who, reading the last words of Ezekiel, "And the name of that city shall be The Lord is there," closed his Bible, and said, "O that I might find the city with that name!" Somewhere, he thought, there is a church rightly named, "The Lord is there." Following the prompting of his faith and hope, he set out to find it. He went first to one church, and then to another, staying long enough to get their general idea of Christian doctrine and methods of action, until he had visited nine of the more prominent Protestant sects, including a wide range of doctrine and ritual, from Episcopacy to Quakerism, and from right-wing orthodoxy to left-wing heterodoxy.

In each of these nine sects he found something good, but no one of them fully satisfied him. So he gave up his search in the direction of the sects. In his despair a friend suggested, "Read again, and more carefully, the prophet's vision of that city, and you will find there were gates on all sides. Every gate led to the city. Keep straight on any of the roads the gate of which you have entered, and you will come to the place where the Lord is, provided you are right yourself. It is not the gate through which you go, but the heart you carry through the gate. Every church has within it elements

of truth and error. There is no perfection this side the city of God."

Then the young man said, "I will seek to be a disciple of Christ. I will love all men though they love me not. In whatever place I find a true worker for the good of his fellows, I will be to him a brother." And with this simple but sublime faith in his heart, he went forth again into the world, no longer seeking the city—he had found it.

Such is the thread of the story. On this thread the author has strung such beads of thought as he has gathered, probably, in his own experience; for all books worth much are but transcripts of the inner life of the author.

The book is written in the interest of a broader type of Christian faith than that which generally prevails. It is one of the many signs of the times, multiplying in our own day so rapidly that, not only "he who runs may read," but he who reads *must run* if he would note them all.

There can be no question among those who observe the various winds of religious thought which keep the theological air in healthy circulation, in what direction the prevailing currents blow. For while there is, now and then, a cold blast from the icy regions of unmelted dogmatism, showing that there are localities, even yet, where the sun shines very obliquely, still the prevailing thought of our time is genial and spring-like, indicating that, in the revolution of humanity round its central orb, it has passed the winter solstice, and is slowly but surely approaching the vernal equinox.

This is seen, not merely in the growth of this or that sect, called "Liberal,"—for in our rapidly growing country all sects are growing,—but in the larger, freer, and better spirit that is penetrating all denominations, guiding earnest and enquiring minds into higher channels of thought. No sect should arrogate to itself the praise of this manifest change. We confess we should have less confidence in this drift of thought if we saw nothing in it but the influence of a single branch of the church, even though that branch were our own. Doubtless every one has his influence, for good or ill. Every man who sees a higher truth than his neighbor, and lives it,

helps his neighbor to see it and live it. God works through agencies, and he can make a single man or a single sect the instrument of great good to the world, if the man or sect be fit to be used in his sacred service. But to attribute this great drift of thought toward a more liberal form of Christian faith to any single agency, or any one class of agencies, is to lose sight of that overarching providence enfolded all agencies, and using them all in working out the purposes of Divine Love. Instead, therefore, of saying, "See what liberal Christians are doing," we would say, reverently, "See what God is doing, not by one agency, merely, but by many; using liberal Christians whenever they are found fit to be used in so high a service, doing something through them, but much more outside of them, and often in spite of them — for every one who claims to be a liberal Christian, and shows in his spirit and life that he is neither liberal nor Christian, is a hindrance rather than a help: but whether with us or without us, whether through us so far as we can be used, or through other and worthier agencies, — see what God is doing, by the best thought and life of our times, to lift the world to higher and worthier ideas of the Christian life."

Among all denominations we find Israel Knights, — not among the young only, but of mature thought and large experience, — who are dissatisfied with the old statements of doctrine; who see that the one thing most needful is Christian life, and who are looking earnestly for the city rightly named, "The Lord is there." Not only in our own country, where the mass of the people are educated to think for themselves, but all over the world fresh tokens of the same tendency are so increasingly apparent, that to quote names, as we have been accustomed to do, is superfluous. Names no longer represent the movement. Men do not lead it. It leads them. It sweeps them away from their old moorings, out into the open sea of God's boundless truth. Some are frightened, and put back into port with the first favoring breeze, solemnly warning those safe in the harbor to keep every keedge and anchor down that they may not strike adrift and be swept to destruction. Others, believing that the

"Sea is His, and He made it," and that "His Spirit moves on the face of the waters," are not afraid to trust the sweep of the providential current. They recognize it as not of men, or of blind nature, but of Him "who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand." They see in it a gulf stream in the ocean of religious thought destined to bear the genial warmth of higher views of God and truth and duty into the frigid zones and polar regions of theological speculations, so changing the temperature of the whole broad sea of religious enquiry.

But in the meantime, where is the city — the city rightly named "The Lord is there"? Israel Knights, as we have seen, wandered from one denomination to another, hoping to find it, till at last he gave up in despair. He found good in all, but perfection in none. His search made him charitable, but it did not give him peace. It is not finding the city to learn where it is not. It was not until the young man said to himself, "I will seek to be a disciple of Christ," and entered at once on the practical work of the Christian *life*, that he found the city. He might have *searched* for it forever without finding it. He might have visited, not *nine* sects merely, but nine hundred, and still have been as far as ever from the object of his search. Not till he quit searching for it did he find it. The kingdom of God does not come by observation, by search here and there. It is not something to be run after. It is "*within you*." So near that one never finds it till he has done looking for it and comes to the conclusion that he will not look for it any longer, but just content himself with simply trying to live as a true child of God, just where he is, when lo! he finds himself in the very city he has been looking for so long.

And this city is open on all sides, east, west, north, and south. As Ezekiel saw it in vision, it had a gate for each one of the twelve tribes of Israel. All were not obliged to go in at the same gate. Reuben was not forced to go through the gate of Levi, nor Gad through the gate of Dan. Each could go in at his own gate, the essential thing being, not the gate, but the inside city of God.



The delusion of sectarianism, under every name, strict or liberal, is that of magnifying the importance of its own gate, not seeing that the city is open *on all sides*, and that it is of little consequence from what point of the theological compass a man comes if he really passes through the gate into the city. The gate through which one enters upon the Christian life, in the joy of first love, is very likely to seem the only true entrance; so that when one is found inside who came in some other way, even though engaged ever so earnestly in Christian work, he is suspected of being an interloper, and looked upon with suspicion, if not ordered out. Each gate has its pass-word. Not to know that is to have no right to be in the city at all. The wedding garment must be cut to the pattern of the doorway in order to pass inspection. Hence the great controversies of the church for ages have been, not about the city of God, but the gates that lead to it; and so each sect has been exposed to the constant peril of sticking fast in its own doorway, instead of going through into the golden city of God's love and service.

Henry Ward Beecher, speaking of the use of Scripture texts, is reported to have said that he regarded a text as a gate opening into God's green pastures of truth. "But," said he, "some ministers, instead of passing through into those pastures, spend the time of the sermon in swinging on the gate." This is as true of sects as of texts. The principles of a sect, like the truths of a text, are a gate to *pass through* into the city of God. But the perpetual temptation is, instead of going through, to swing upon the gate, to sing its praises, and tell how much safer and better it is than any other. Those who really pass through into the city of God's love and service find, after they leave the shadow of the gate, and get into the sunlight of loving labor for God and man, that they are in sympathy with all other true workers, no matter through what gate they come. Just as soon as men get through their theology into true religion, pure and undefiled, they find they are all of one spirit. The love of God and man, of purity and goodness, are the same everywhere, on the earth and in the heavens. Here Catholics and Prot-

estants, orthodox and heterodox, meet on common ground, and, in mutual and delightful surprise, find they are all of one spirit.

Gates, however important, are not the city. Even our liberal gate, grand and inviting as it is, is no better to swing on than the others. When Israel Knight in his search for the city came to the Unitarian gate, we were a little disappointed, we confess, that he did not pass in. That he tried unsuccessfully all the other entrances we could understand and account for; but *our gate!* it really seemed to us just the thing he was looking for. And so he would have found it if he had only *gone through*. But he merely swung on it, as on all the rest, and so failed of finding the city.

What we and all the other sects need is to pass through our several gates, leaving them wide open behind us for all who will follow, looking on and up for whatever of new truth and new experience God may have in store for us, while we gladly work with all of kindred heart and purpose for the real uplifting of the world. Who can estimate the amount of Christian work waiting to be done that no single sect can ever accomplish, work that requires, and must have, the united labors of all souls touched with the love of God and man. All around us are wrongs to be righted, evils to be cured, sorrows to be comforted, fallen ones to be lifted up, wandering ones to be found and brought home, ministries of love and mercy of all sorts open to all, asking not for uniformity of faith among the workers, but only for loving, human hearts, filled with the Christ Spirit of redeeming love.

The city is nigh. Like the kingdom of God, it is "at hand." To go out hunting for it, knocking at the gates of Dan, Issachar, Benjamin, and all the rest, is to miss it. To enter at once on the simple and cheerful service of God and our fellows, in the spirit of the loving and self-sacrificing Jesus, is to find it. This is the city on whose spacious dome, broad as the sky, is written in letters of living light, "The Lord is *here*."

## LEAVES FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I WAS blessed with parents both of whom were deeply religious, not only strict in observing the institutions and ordinances of Christianity, but incorporating its teachings with every event of life, and every thought and feeling. They were somewhat rigid, Puritanical, some would say, in their conscientious regard for the slightest things that concern the culture of piety. This was true especially of my father; but he rarely, by his management or deportment in the family, gave me a distaste for religion itself.

It was a happy hour, when, at the return of each Sabbath evening, my mother gathered us all around her chair, and called on us to repeat alphabetically, each in turn, the psalms and hymns we had learned. I have before me the very book, old Belknap, the bridge between Watts and the coming Greenwood, which my father gave me with his autograph in it, out of which I at one time and another committed some two hundred hymns to memory. And, if to repeat them then was a pleasure, they have grown more and more precious to me with length of years. Among this large number, charged with the best strains of Watts, Doddridge, Cowper, Mrs. Steele, and others of like genius and devoutness, I have through life found always some one adapted to each of my varying moods and experiences. In wakeful hours, of which ill health has caused me so many, the darkness and silence have been cheered by angel gifts from this never-failing storehouse of sweet and comforting verse. The tedious days of protracted sickness have been alleviated from this source. Bereavement and sorrow unto anguish have drawn an inexpressible solace from this deep and pure spring. And, when temptation would entice or compel me to evil, a single stanza has not seldom driven the seducer from my thoughts.

After one of our delightful Sabbath reunions at evening, I enjoyed especially the repeating of my prayers with my mother at the bedside. Those little petitions lifted me up to

"our Father in heaven," as nothing else could. They were a check to my tendencies to wrong actions, and laid a foundation broad and deep for subsequent needs. It is sad to think, that, as I advanced in years, this invaluable habit, although never wholly abandoned, — for the form was repeated on still, — lost its early spirit and grew feeble when the face and sweet tones of that dear mother were no longer near to quicken my devotion. This loss was not supplied when the evening of the holy day was all given to conversation, or when a part of it was occupied with the reading aloud of religious books. Those were to me irksome hours ; I fancied my older brother did not read so well as he might ; and, if either of my parents took the book in hand, neither could "Baxter's Saints' Rest" give any rest to my soul, nor "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion" afford any elevation to my faith, or growth to my patience, nor "Law's Serious Call" speak loud enough to keep me awake. My thoughts were often devoted to sage criticisms on the tone of the reader, and a longing for the close of the chapter. Many an evening did I seek relief in hastening early — far earlier than I consented to on week days — to my welcome bed.

When I hear some wise and true mother in these days ask her child to bring the book of his own choice, and see him sit quietly by her side as she reads and explains the hard word or harder idea to the eager listener, I say within myself, "Happy child, did you know your privilege !" Many a heavy hour of my early days would these well-chosen books, joined to this same care and devotedness of parental love, have redeemed from what seems, as I look back, worse than a blank in those distant years.

What I have said of the value of hymns committed to memory in childhood is equally applicable to the imprinting on the young mind large portions of the Bible. From my first school-days, we were required not only to read this book, — now unhappily sought in some quarters to be excluded from the schoolroom, — but to learn chapter after chapter of it in the summer term. At the end of the season all the schools in town were assembled in the church to repeat, be-

fore the minister and others, what we had learned from week to week and recited each Saturday. These exercises were followed by a generous distribution of "Watts' Hymns for Infant Minds," and other books of the kind, among all the children.

In this way I treasured up large portions of the New Testament and some of the Old. So engraved were those words into the very texture of my mind, that I retain most of them to this day. I regard this as a fortunate training; not that there may not be some evils in it: no human good is free from all evil. What though, as an able writer in the "Old and New" has said, the mind may thus be led "to look at human nature, life, duty, and immortality, through the windows of the ark, or from the porch of the temple?" After all, in this busy world, there is enough to counteract that tendency; and since the danger now, and indeed always in periods of advanced culture, is quite the other way, that the Bible will be neglected and forgotten by the mass of people in their riper years, it is wise to stamp its best lines on the susceptible mind of childhood. For, take however low a view we may of the inspiration of the Scriptures, all must agree, that, to be wholly ignorant of the letter of so remarkable and influential a book as this has been, and still is, betrays an education essentially defective.

I have seldom been obliged to use a concordance in referring to passages at all familiar; and, to a man especially in the ministry, or either of the professions requiring public utterance, or indeed, I should add, to any one without exception, this treasury of Scripture language, to be quoted literally or to be interpreted in after years, is an inestimable possession. And, commonly speaking, it is one to be acquired in early childhood, when the memory is tenacious of language, or never.

I learned at this period also—what may seem to some of questionable utility, perhaps—the "New England Primer," including the "Westminster Catechism." But I never regretted it; for I early came to ponder those oft-quoted lines, —

"In Adam's fall  
We sinned all,"

And their import was my daily meditation,—though I confess my young mind was puzzled to comprehend what “reprobation,” “justification,” “sanctification,” “adoption,” and other fearfully long words could mean. Still, retaining them all firmly as I did, I could better guess in after years the import of the grave discussions I had heard about election, total depravity, and other then prevalent doctrines. I could see why my father demurred at their literal signification, and said, as he often would, “I call myself a *moderate* Calvinist.” I came early in life to regard his position—as it is now considered so popularly among those who believe themselves still Calvinists—the wise and true ground. When I heard one and another spoken of with suspicion as being “Armenian” in their tendencies, I felt sure they must, in that case, give up such and such things I had learned in my Catechism. If in my boyhood I was silenced on giving a sage opinion in the matter, by the rebuke that these were “mysteries” I could not yet understand, it was a satisfaction to know just what the mysteries were, or at least in what language they were expressed.

To be rebuffed in my habit of asking all manner of questions was a sore part of my early discipline. As I rode with my parents on the long day’s journey to my grandfather’s, I would seize every opportunity to put some inquiry in regard to subjects I was thinking of, or more frequently about this or that object we saw on the way. My mother, wearied by my persistency, would sometimes say, “Do not ask so many questions; you will wear me out if you do.” She thought nothing escaped my notice, and would say, “Why do you look around everywhere for something new and strange?” But the advice was lost upon me; and when I came afterwards to read in that excellent little book, “Evenings at Home,” the story of “Eyes and no Eyes, or the Art of Seeing,” I felt sure that I should have been the Robert, and not the William, of that story. Children often try their parents by their inquisitiveness. But let fathers and mothers have patience with them; for these ten thousand questions are the little thirsty roots of the tree of knowledge, and now is the

time to water them. If we put off our children by giving them no answers, or, to save ourselves trouble, give them wrong answers, the tree may perish with drought. Or, still worse, our untrue answers will mingle with its very sap, and so fill the child with error and evil, until he becomes a *bohun upas*, poisoned, and poisoning others morally and spiritually, aye intellectually, through life.

With my ardent temperament and strong propensities, — some of them toward evil, — I did not escape the temptations incident to childhood. And I now recall with sorrow and shame many deviations from the path of purity and rectitude. It was my misfortune to have as schoolmates and near neighbors some who were not only very vicious themselves, but also corruptors of boys and youth. Constitutionally susceptible to impressions from others, it needed more than a father's counsels and a mother's warnings to keep me from the power of such tempters. Through them I fell into snares of which I must, though it is with reluctance, speak.

I remember a companion who sought to persuade me that I was foolish to be so scrupulous about speaking the truth. A little falsehood was of no consequence: a lie, if not detected, could do no harm. By his example and influence I came ere long to the conclusion that an untruth, if told to escape punishment, was of no importance. I had gone with him once for recreation on Sunday to a distant part of the town. My parents were strict in requiring their children to observe every hour of the Sabbath; and I was sure, if they knew just where I had been and what I had done, they would punish me severely. My companion told me, if they questioned me, to say I had only taken a little walk to such a place. This I did; but the stings it left in my conscience! For long years that offense haunted me day and night; and to this hour it throws a shade over the past.

And so of another wrong thing. I had more than one companion who used profane language. But that was a sin against which my parents had faithfully and earnestly warned me. It was breaking one of the ten commandments, and that idea was enough to fill me with terror. And yet, one



day, on my way to school, a boy struck me in anger, and I uttered a word—shall I ever forget it? No: the very spot where I stood as I spoke it is burnt into my brain. I never did the like again; but that was enough to embitter days and years.

And so of the ebullitions of passion. I recollect one instance in which, for some injury done me, I went stealthily toward a companion, and dealt him a fearful blow. Bitter, to this day, is the memory of that act. My reflections upon it, with other strong influences, led me to strive for years against this besetting sin of my temperament. And, by the grace of God, the time at length came when I could control my temper. Let no boy, troubled as I was, ever despair of himself: he can, if he only will, cast out this demon from his bosom.

I often look with amazement on the neglect of parents to guard their children, in their early school-days, against corrupt associates. A good teacher is much; the culture of a child's intellect is much; but they are not everything. And let there be what deficiencies there may in these respects, it should be our last resort to put a boy or girl under any teacher or in any school, however loud its praises, where the companionships are evil. Better the mind famish for lack of knowledge or culture, than the moral nature be ruined by intimate association with those whose inner life and spirit you are not willing your child should partake.

Among the pleasant memories of my early days, I recall a colored family that lived not far from my father's. The head of the household, a thoroughbred negro, was good-natured and as faithful as the sunshine. And how gentle and motherly the wife was. Shall I ever forget the nice little cakes she cooked for me in the Saturday's bake, or the kind tone with which she always spoke to me? And the two daughters—I loved them as if they had been blood relations. One of them, long years after, walked several miles to see me, and told me, with a beaming face, that she had lately "joined the church." Her pleasant smile and kind manner carried me back almost to my infancy. That dear old circle, in their simple, unpainted cottage, still shine on memory's page; and

I believe my life-long interest in their race dates back to that spot. It made me yearn for their God-intended liberty, and caused my heart to leap for joy when I read at last the noble decree for their emancipation on our soil penned by the immortal Lincoln.

And now I am in the schoolroom again; and there comes up, at the old winter school, the figure of a stern man, his face thin and cutting like a razor whenever his eye fell. Those fearful punishments reappear: one boy is compelled to hold a heavy book, for some slight offense, at arm's length. If he bears it well, another book is laid upon it. Does his arm tremble—a quick blow on the elbow follows. Another is required, and for a whisper, or perhaps a smile only, to stoop over the floor, put his finger on a certain spot, and for half an hour, it may be, “hold a knot down.” A third breaks some arbitrary law, and is called up, commanded to hold out his hand, and struck with a hard rule until the blood spirts from his wounds. But this tyranny and cruelty are too much even for a long-enduring school-committee of that age. The man is at length dismissed, and a new incumbent presents himself, selected chiefly for his mildness. And what a change in our little empire! “The master” is a college student, bland in manner, with smooth and sunny face, and he enacts well the part assigned him. We can whisper as much as we please, and study as little as we please; we come early or late, and are “dismissed” for any and every excuse. If we do not learn our lessons, we have “a good time;” and we vote our master a first-rate man, and are all sorry when the school term ends. Not the girls alone, but some boys, as I remember, mingle tears with their silent farewells to our loved teacher as he turns for the last time from our presence.

Soon spring returns, and I am called to pay my scot in the work of the farm. Not much, to be sure, can the little boy do. He can carry drink to the workmen, and it was something stronger than water in those days. The most temperate must have a few gallons of “New England rum” for hay-time. See our lad mounted on the steady old animal, riding horse to plow. No plowing-machines, or any other labor-

saving machines, on the farm in those days. Follow him as he drops the corn-seed in its furrow ; pity him as he bends his little back, hour after hour, in picking and piling up stones in the grass-field, or swings his mallet to scatter the fertilizing lumps over the plains. When will night come, and rest for his weary soul and body ? "Never will he be a farmer, not he, for the world." To weed the endless rows of beets and carrots, to kill the vermin on the squash and cucumber vines, to plant out the young cabbages, to cut the interminable hills of corn-stalks,—"yes, let him who likes these things do them. *I will never be a farmer.*"

Glad am I when the fall comes, and I am permitted once more to ride in the "one-horse chaise" with my parents up to the good old home of my grandfather. For I remember that glorious orchard ; and as soon as we reach the house I rush out to the peach-tree. Its branches actually lie on the ground, and the large, sweet peaches turn their red cheeks for the kiss of the sun. On this gentle slope stand the apple-trees in martial array. Here is the golden Harvey, there the beautiful and tender Delicate, and the rich Honeycomb. I cannot resist it, although I must suffer, as I did, the penalty of sickness for indulging to excess in the delicious temptation. See me standing under this broad chestnut-tree as the nuts rattle down at my feet. There was a hard frost last night ; and, little as I have ever loved to leave my bed early in the morning, I did not allow my grandfather's sheep to get to the trees before me, as the first sun opened the burrs. And such chestnuts ! Never were the like, so large, so sweet. When, a year or two since, I saw here and there a straggler of those old trees still standing, the boy came over me, and I wanted to rush again for the nuts.

I went into the old house, and saw the very spot where, more than sixty years ago, the tall clock stood, on which my grandfather, with his big umbrella in his hand, and clad in a surtout that came down to his feet, taught me how to tell the hour of the day. I see him again as there comes one of those to a child marvelous events, an eclipse. We are looking at the wondrous moon ; and, as the shade passes off, I

exclaim, "It grows lesser and lesser!" "No, you must not say lesser and lesser, but less and less." You may depend upon it, I was never guilty of that offense afterward. If I doubted about any word, I would quietly ask my good grandmother. We somehow trust the tender and forbearing heart of woman most when the perils of speech, or, indeed, almost any other perils in word or deed, come near us.

What strange imaginings possess the mind of the young child! I recollect seeing in the attic of my grandfather's house something on a stand which resembled a human head. I thought it must be an idol. I had read so much about idols in the Bible, in connection with "the Lord God," that I imagined this figure, being like what I conceived an idol to be, had some mysterious connection with God, and I was almost afraid to turn my eyes toward it. Easily, in this way, is a child misled and filled with false ideas on the subject of religion. Above all things, therefore, we should avoid exciting his fears in this direction. Let his first conceptions of God be associated with pleasant objects, with scenes and occasions that awaken his love: avoid everything like groundless apprehensions connected with spiritual topics. We do not realize how sensitive children are to impressions from this quarter, and indeed from any quarter. I suffered more than words can describe from the ignorance of my parents and early teachers on this account. I was naturally very timid, and it was thought wise to attempt to overcome this weakness by exposing me to fearful objects and situations, and compelling me to conquer my timidity. For this purpose I was made to go to bed alone and in a distant chamber, far from any human being. Many a night did I imagine I heard some one making forcible entrance into my chamber, and buried myself for hours in the bed-clothes, and trembled in a cold sweat. Instead of making me brave, this increased my natural timidity, and gave a shock to my nervous system from which I never recovered.

Children are too often treated in this way through wantonness and sport. While at school, a young man attending with us children would stop at noon; and, as we were taking

our dinner around the stove, he would spend the whole interval in relating ghost stories. And when our minds were wrought up to terror, he would say, "One is coming down the chimney now; you will see him in a moment." It required only a little rattling of the stove-funnel, or, especially if the day was stormy and dark, a faint shake of a window or door, to convince us that a ghost was in the room.

Now a teacher, a nurse, any human being, man or woman, whom we have known guilty of this practice with our children, we ought at once to rebuke; and, if persisted in, we ought to place our children out of their reach. I trust this cure and treatment, a sin of ignorance in past days, is unknown under the Christianized spirit of this age.

But, with all he sometimes suffered, the little boy had many a sunny scene in those days, and no one entered with more glee into his sports. Among these was the game of ball; not the modern "base ball," which electrifies the "Harvards" and "Lowells," and calls forth the cheers of spectators, old and young, grave and gay. No: we were content with long ball, four in a line, two strikes and two catches. And a merry time we had in this simple sport. In the spring months the ball passion broke out with irrepressible strength. It is Fast Day, and we all, good Puritans, have been to "meeting," morning and afternoon both. Toward night the boys gather on the common and discuss the great question, "What shall we do?" "Play ball," whispers one. "Yes," shouts another, "that is it." But a tender conscience objects, "It is Fast Day; we must not play ball." "Why not?" asks another. "Fast Day is not Sunday; it is only a day made by the Governor's proclamation."—"What of that? If you break man's laws, you break God's laws." This was a fatal blow for me. I could not join in the play. The result was, the game was given up; and soon we all went to our homes, and slept better, I have no doubt, for our conscientious decision. We had no dinner on that day: everybody then kept Fast Day, so far as the noon meal was concerned. But when the sun had set, rely upon it, we made amends for our abstinence; and, what with the stout breakfast I took as a preparation for the day's

fasting, and the sly nibblings at the closet when no one was near, and what with the masterly supper we made, I thought we fared a little better than on other days. I was never sorry for the annual Fast.

In the evenings of the old season we often gathered at my paternal grandfather's, and happy times those were. I am sitting on a block, under the wide, old-fashioned chimney, where I can look up and see the stars. Presently there is a good time in the adjoining room: we hear the rattling of plates, and soon my dear grandmother appears with a nice dish of apples and a bountiful supply of walnuts, followed by the never-failing mug of cider. My grandfather had a tree which bore nuts "equal," he always said, "to shagbarks;" and, for years upon years, its plentiful yield supplied the whole family with this choice fruit.

Speaking of the stars reminds me of the little square book of astronomy which I studied with delight in my early days. To see the Great Bear and the Little Bear, and the other marvelous constellations, with my own eyes, as I then did in the bright evenings, paid me richly for loading my young brain with such heavy words as "Sagittarius," "Capricornus," "Aquarius," and the rest of the long train. And, better than all, this simple book gave me a more vivid conception of that mighty Being, who created and still moves these vast bodies, than any other book beside the sacred Scriptures. I think parents mistake in not teaching their younger children the rudiments of this noble science. It is one which for its moral, no less than its intellectual influences, for the sublime scenes it unfolds, not only to the outward vision, but to the imagination especially, and for its power to elevate and spiritualize our nature, in connection with the rich revelations of the Bible, may well occupy our thoughts from the earlier to the later years of our life.

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"The more sympathies we gain or awaken for what is beautiful, by so much deeper will be our sympathy for that which is most beautiful, — the human soul.

## MAKING MISTAKES, AND SOME OF THE MISTAKES WE MAKE.

MAINLY INTENDED FOR YOUNG MEN.

BY J. F. W. WARE.

IT is the privilege of man to make mistakes. It is the power of doing this which separates him from, lifts him above the brute. Never to mistake is either to be a God, or an idiot, above or below the standard of human ability. It is an adage in every life, older than the memories of any of us, that to err is human, and one feels as if that were the only evidence of humanity about some persons. I do not think the adage a slur any way upon what so many please to call our "*poor* human nature." It is but the statement of a fact of its condition, which must of necessity be its condition until it shall be lifted out of the attitude of humanity or sunk below its level. Only a finite and conscious being can err. From one point of view error is a sign of dignity. So also is the power to mistake. Alike they mark the intermediate condition between the animal and the Deity in which we all find ourselves, in which we all pass this stage of our probation.

Somebody says,—and the remark is so true that I wish I could remember who,—“that you will never be wise if you have never been a fool.” That is a fact for which a man should thank God and take courage. That a man must at many times be a fool is like saying that grass must grow and sparks fly upward. It is the inevitable law. You cannot have manhood at any other price; you cannot grow into a man any other way. It is part and process of your development. I can look back, any of you can look back, to the time when your teacher blandly suggested, or your school-mate emphatically declared that you were a fool. I can remember, you can remember, that the verdict of your own judgment has been many times unqualifiedly that. We have each and all been discouraged under the assertion and con-

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viction, while we really ought not to have been. We were only paying the price of wisdom, proving our heirship. There is always hope of a man who has been a fool, and knows it, and the recurrence of folly in him, so be it be not the folly of willfulness, is but encouragement. There are fools, genuine, native, unadulterated; there are those too stupid to be fools, too brutally gross and selfish; there are those who have not life enough to be fools. I do not include these. I simply mean that in the best and bravest struggle up to manhood it is inevitable that at times a man be overcome of some folly, and the fact of it, if he rightly use it, should be one to rejoice at as a help toward, rather than a hindrance to, the manhood he is after.

This too is true. Emerson says, "Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults." Exactly that I should say of mistakes. Every man in his lifetime has need to thank his mistakes. Not, of course, if he is going to keep in with them, treat them as pets and friends, become ever more given to them; not unless his mistakes are going to help him into that peculiar grace and power of virtue they alone can, that rugged reliability of character man never gets except by struggle with himself. He who has any desire for, any earnestness in striving after a stalwart character does not need to be told how much he owes his mistakes, which have let him into secrets with regard to himself and led him into mysteries as wealth of experience, vital to him in his career.

I start with these two sayings of others — pithy and wise — because I want to start well upon the topic I am to write of, one about which is much misapprehension, upon which I wish I might be able to throw some light. I have a theory — and it is only part of a general theory of life — that a mistake is a near kin to a virtue; that mistakes are life's golden opportunities; and that mistakes corrected are the rounds of ascent leading up out of a mere humanity to that mingling of human and Divine which is the capacity and the dower of our human nature. A stupid blunder, a dead fool's work, I do not mean, or a downright sinner's willful work. A mistake is better

than that. It argues some manhood. A *mis-take* is a wrong choice, as the analysis of the word shows. Wrong choice necessitates decision, and some prior reflection, and these are manly qualities, and germs of virtue. A blunder has none of these elements. It is too gross. It is only stupid. A sin is a deliberate choice, morally oblique. There is no moral obliquity in a mistake. It is a matter of judgment, not of ethics, a thing a man is perpetually liable to under any new, sudden combination of circumstances, a thing which may have a great variety, even disaster of consequence, and yet have no just place among, and should neither by the man himself or others be considered as of the number of moral obliquities. An honest, conscientious mistake is no sin, is a very dignified, honorable affair. It may be, it often is, the seed-corn of virtue.

We mistake in thinking so much of mistakes themselves. We fret too much over them, not enough over our sins. Sins, vices, bad habits do not trouble us much. Mistakes do. We are more apt to be provoked and discouraged at the mistakes we make than the habits we form or the sins we commit. We feel shame and misery wholly out of proportion to the wrong-doing. And I judge our pride is concerned in this. We don't like to own up to a mistake even to ourselves. It is an imputation upon our wisdom, our prudence, our tact; it puts us down in the scale. We are not so master of the position as we had supposed, or desire others to think. To be mortified is one of our deepest sensations, and it follows and haunts us long, when some graver thing, some positive wrong is soon excused or forgotten. I think the little festering of a mistake more irritant to our self-esteem than is a wrong deed to our conscience. Sins, vices, habits are things of our definite, deliberate preference and acceptance. Their commission is in accordance with our will. They do not trouble our self-love. But a mistake—an error in judgment or in conduct however trivial—why it is the sliver at the quick of the nail. How it will dog us through the day; what a nightmare will it be in the night! How thought of it will drive the blood to our face, open the pores,

and make us superbly uncomfortable! How it will burn in the consciousness and scourge us with the fear of other men's opinion! Sometimes we let a mistake become the pet plague of our lives. It stands back in the past in unrelieved blackness, and we never look that way that we do not see it. It is the scape-goat of all after wrong, mishap and shortcoming. "*But for that*" is our constant sigh. I do not deny that mistakes may prove permanent disasters. I have known such, but as they had no evil purpose, were only mistakes, errors of judgment rather than of will, they ought not to have the tyrant and discomfiting power we allow them.

I don't believe a man is worth a fig who does not make mistakes. I don't agree with Lord Derby, who said of something that "it was worse than a sin, it was a mistake." A mistake has not the elements of which a sin is made. I have made mistakes in plenty, and if I am to get any more manhood expect to make plenty more in the process. I do not believe any true, ripening life possible without them. They have given me a great deal too much annoyance, they will yet give me too much, but I believe they have helped me to most of the little wisdom and character I have got. Froude says, "Mistakes are often the best teachers of all." Most heartily I say Amen! to that. I know what they have taught me. They are better masters than many I went to school to. I remember their rod, not their lessons. Of these the rod is forgot, the teaching remains. A mistake is not so bad a thing. It has life in it if you have any manhood to meet it with. It is not a blot upon the escutcheon, but the sign of knighthood; it is not a thing to shadow life, but brighten it. I think one should take his mistakes easily and calmly, try to avoid making them, but neither be unhappy because nor brood over them, nor let them absorb the time and power he wants for something else. I think he should be brave enough to own them, to correct them, and to profit by them; wise enough to feel that they are inevitable at some time, in some things unavoidable with all our foresight and wisdom; that they are attendants upon this state in which we dwell, inter-

mediate the unwisdom of the brute and the full wisdom of God.

Let us look at a few specific mistakes which most men make early in life, some men keep on making. I can attempt nothing complete. A few examples are enough.

It is not a mistake in a young man to be ambitious. It would be a mistake if he were not; for ambition is a wholesome ingredient in character and a necessary spur. Without ambition is no accomplishment. Life is only vapid and inane. Behind all doing ambition lies, not necessarily the cormorant power that leads man into mere selfishness, but the vital impulse which drives him on towards usefulness. It is right to have ambition. The mistake is in the purposes one puts ambition to.

A young man's ambition is apt to be neither lofty, nor broad, nor far-reaching. It is to excel in that which is immediate, in the thing of to-day, in the gain of the moment, in the set he is in, in the things that set endorses and approves. His desire is not excellence because he loves excellence, because in her he sees that which is best for him, which makes the best life; but his desire is to outstrip others, be the first in at the goal, to get some little distinction which he has been taught to consider of moment. The things upon which the young man centres his ambition are apt to be mistakes, some of which will correct themselves as he grows older in time to prevent serious mischief, while others may get fixed and become a part of the influences which warp so many lives one side of their true good unless watched and choked. When I see a young man ambitious to rise by industry and integrity, making himself master of his vocation, master of himself meanwhile, not hunting after a reputation with his employers and other men, but utterly and honestly faithful; when I see him putting himself down to his career as if he believed in it as the way ordained for him, that out of which he can carve the best manhood and the best life; when with honest love he follows up the gift God has made him and works it with a success, I feel that his ambition is to be honored, and that whatever the world may

say or do about it he is making the best use of the talents lent him. To noble ambition much credit belongs, and even its aberrations must be respected. But the low ambitions, the unworthy aims, the belittling objects of aspiration so common with young men, terribly mistaking the object and purpose of life — God's idea about it and man's obligation — one should not be silent about. They mar the present, they jeopard the future. They confuse values and dethrone moralities, and give a gross superficial gloss as worthless as the tradesman the other day found the brass filings to be which had been palmed on him for gold. When a young man hopes to purchase favor or advancement by being a toady or a flunkey to his employer, or thinks it will help him to be obsequious to men of money or of influence or women of beauty or position; when his ambition is to stand well with certain men rather than to stand well with himself, his ambition is a mistake, and he is trying at a ruinous price that which will in the end turn out as valueless as the coffer in the tale, which the owner supposed he had filled with gold, but which he found to contain leaves. Many a young man has crushed the instinct of manhood early by such obsequiousness, and has grown old in a bondage whose fetters cut the deeper and cut the closer as the years go.

Have only noble ambitions. Desire not only to excel, but be sure that the thing in which you would excel is itself worthy and helpful. Avoid the poor and bad things for which too many contend. It is a poor ambition that craves the notoriety of the club or the ball-room, the billiard table or the saloon, the livery stable or the sidewalk; that desires the repute of excelling in any low thing, or anything one cannot afford or had better not do. It is a wretched, wretched mistake, this ambition to win admiration of one's companions for doing bad things, disreputable things, doubtful things, an ambition that possesses and eats up hordes of young men, as one has only to go back to his own youth to know, or to keep his eyes and ears open to discover. What abominable things have I known young men ambitious to excel in, glorying in their shame, making public and a boast

of that which they should have loathed themselves for even thinking of. Let your ambitions all be pure and worthy. Ambition is a quality easily turned one way or the other. It may be a man's making, it may be a man's undoing. Well regulated, wisely directed, it is one of the best working qualities a man can have, and has been a main element in every large success, in every true character; turned to low ends it has been many a man's ruin. It is frequently said of one and another, "He is ambitious," as if that were a taint or a disgrace. Only is it so when low in its aim and unscrupulous in its method, outraging the higher laws of God in its pursuit. Ambition is all right. It is the purpose you put it to which may be wrong. There was never a man of more ambition than Jesus Christ. It crops out everywhere—ambitious to be about his Father's business, to do his Father's will. A like ambition absorbed Paul. Every man who puts his soul into anything is ambitious. Bonaparte was a man of no more ambition than Washington, had not his soul more wrapped in self than was Washington's wrapped in country. The difference lay in the use he put ambition to. Let that be our care.

Ruskin somewhere says, "It is pitiful to have a dim conception of duty." It is inevitable that a young man's should at first be dim. His conclusions must be made up from the surface, and in themselves form but a superficial conclusion of that. His mistake is not in his superficial views, but in not seeing and owning that they are superficial; in holding to, asserting them and decrying all others, as if he had all the tried wisdom of the ancient of days, as if the head on his shoulders were a very old and very wise one, as if he were thoroughly conversant with everything relating to life and had seen through everything pertaining to experience. What he himself feels, sees, supposes, is law, truth—all that can be seen felt or known. But what are his grounds? How deeply has he read himself or man or life or God? What does he know of proportions and relations, and the whole intricacy and delicacy of arrangement and duty? He sees but the outside of the outside, the thin epidermis, the cuticle of life. He cannot judge. He must mistake. He does mistake.

His pet phrase is, "Can't I believe my senses?" He believes them omniscient, while of the whole life out of their range, the whole life in which they have no part, he has and can have no idea. It is not his fault that he is of his senses, sensuous, knowing only what they tell. His own exuberant life is of them. He can see nothing beyond. He receives no other report. He accepts and believes theirs. There is glitter and he calls it gold. There is profession and he calls it sincerity. There is fashion and he calls it life. There is money and he calls it respectable. He does not know the stark and livid thing that life is under these; how falsely they represent human nature and human duty. As he looks into the world certain things assume prominence. They must be attained. He is nothing and nobody without them, — wealth, so he must go into business; fashion, so he must dress and do and say a thousand things he never would of his own accord; a certain kind of personal standing or repute, so he will do those things which shall acquire it. Wealth may give him what Mr. Potiphar called a "palatial residence," but it gives neither domestic peace or self-respect, as Mr. Potiphar too late discovered; fashion may open certain doors and admit to certain favors, but it curdles the affections of the heart and poisons man's intercourse with man; while personal repute is a very equivocal thing, good for nothing anywhere unless the growth of goodness. These things deceive early, and there are those who live long lives under the beck and sway of their hollowness, never really perceiving that they are hollow.

It is one of the mistakes which grow out of this superficial view of life, which life about him takes no pains to correct, that a young man conceives that *business* is the sum and substance of being. You shall not meet him that this does not stick out all over him — in the cars, at hotels, in parlors, as in the counting-room. His talk is of "our house," and "our sales," and of the state of trade. He smells of the shop. Life is to him an opportunity for barter. He seems to shut off everything else from his vision and concentrate all the powers of light upon that. That is a big mistake — and



let the lives of men who grow old without other resource, who cannot do a thing except they see a bargain in it, who cannot buy a dinner or a shirt, pay a hotel bill or purchase a railroad ticket unless they make a bargain out of it, be a warning to you how you allow the whole vitality of your being to be absorbed and then frittered in your mere employment.

Nor do you allow yourselves to be deceived by the artificial division of employments into those which are respectable and those which are not. This is one of the common and most mischievous mistakes. Every vocation which will afford an honest man an honest living is honorable, and to be honorable is to be respectable. Whence this overcrowd of a few occupations, and this dearth in others, but of this foolish, this wicked distinction. How many a man shuts his eyes to the Divine hint because society decrees it would not be respectable in him to follow it, and so lives are dribbled out in counting-rooms and lawyers' offices which God meant should be noble behind plows and looms and at forges. More honest the smut that the collier scarcely cleans away for his weekly shaving, than the dainty linen and tender palm of many an one really unworthy to unloose the latchet of such a man's shoes. Was ever an honorable word more shamefully abused than the word "respectable," which men manage to affix as a false label to many avocations as lives, while they deny it to those to which it belongs? A young man measures respectability by occupation, by dress, by money, by fashion. He feels that he may carry a long-unpaid bill in his pocket — perhaps to his needy washerwoman — and he loses no dignity, but should he carry an honest bundle in his hand he may loose caste. He will hang idly about for days or months, if he cannot get just that place or just that thing to do he chooses, — perhaps pensioner upon the poverty of a mother or a sister, — and he thinks it no disgrace, while he would feel forever lost if he should take to some common labor rather than be idle or dependent. Young men! only idleness, uselessness are dishonorable. The man in earnest anywhere is respectable, and the enthusiast who stood wiping his face, and looked lovingly at his work as he leaned upon his spade,

and declared that there was "*nothing in nature so beautiful as a straight ditch,*" will go into the kingdom of heaven, and ought to enter the kingdom of men's respect, long before the most self-approved nobody, leaning upon his vocation for all the respectability he has.

One of the most fatal mistakes—and a common one—leading to many beside itself, which I have often heard and heard with amazement, is conveyed in the almost proverbial phrase, "The world owes me a living." The world does no such thing. It is not debtor to you, but you are debtor to it, and you cannot work too hard to discharge your obligation. It not only does not owe you anything, but it is not going to pay you anything except as you earn it. And just so fast as you do that, it will pay—not wealth necessarily, not what you may call success or repute, but the honest return of wage, while God stands by to throw in his benediction to make up any deficiency. We are none of us going to thrive except by work, not by waiting for this or that, not by looking to this and the other man, not by expecting to be lifted, boosted into success. There are Micawbers all the world over, men waiting for the world to get ready to pay the obligation they suppose it to be under, men as miserably useless as they are contemptible. The fact is, this is a very busy world,—a bit selfish if you will,—and too thoroughly absorbed in various and varying interests to think much about individual men, young or old. Any one of us is of mighty little consequence, and if you would like a healthy snub to your estimate of yourself, shut yourself up for a week and see how superbly indifferent the world is as to your absence, and with what marvelous facility it accommodates itself to your loss. The fly upon the coach-wheel in the fable is not more insignificant. The only thing that gives significance to you is your work, your industry and fidelity.

Do not make the mistake of leaning upon others. Hold yourself up. Ask no favors. Win them. Do not look to others to help you when you are down. Help yourself. The mother does not pick up her child, but cries out cheerily, "Up again and take another." The gods only help those

who help themselves. Hercules laughs at the wagoner who calls on him. God lifts with those who themselves lift. The thing you cannot yourself earn, go without. Don't get yourself noosed by obligations to others. Neither borrow assistance nor money. Pay-day comes to both, and is always inconvenient. A man comes to you and says, "Can I serve you?" but he says it as a man says, "How are you?" and would be terribly taken back if you were to take him literally. A man promises aid,—"Any time you want a little help or money call on me." You are a fool if you do, and he will be the first to think so. A young man came to me the other day, away off from the North, for help to get to Washington. Only could he get there, a certain member of Congress would help him. He was sure, for hadn't he said,—well, just one of those unmeaning, deceiving things that thousands of men get off, don't mean anything special by, forget, but which strike deep into the memory and the hope of the hearer. I tried to turn him back, to show him how much better it was to go home than to get as a stranger into the vortex and temptation of Washington life. But no; hadn't a member of Congress promised? What blank amazement must have greeted him, and perhaps as blank despair mastered him! Intercourse is corrupt with all this sort of thing, and you lean on it at your cost and as you lean on a broken reed. Lean on yourself. Get ready to bestow favors; but only at the last gasp, when fidelity has failed and the strange set of things which sometimes overtakes the best of men, is against you, allow yourself to be lifted, and then only till you can once more get a place to touch your toes.

What you need to get is a stalwart independence, and you can get it only by self-dependence. Do not expect to get it by any sycophancy or any leaning upon any other, only by standing squarely by yourself. There is a lamentable want of independence among young men, for matter of that among middle-age men, old men. If there come into an assembly, be it at the street corner, a meeting of bank directors, in a parlor or a church, a man in costly apparel and with a gold ring, you will see obsequious bowing and yielding to the gold

in the man's pocket which you would never give to the man without the gold, which simply means that the gold is what you bow to. The man who has "*Hon.*" to his name will be followed, feted, believed; but take the "*Hon.*" off, and it shows that it is the title which takes and not the man. It is disgrace to our manhood that it is so, one of the clouds upon our American character. It might be overlooked in an old, worn-out hereditary aristocracy, but to be grafted into a republic, to be the distinguishing characteristic of a new people, it is too bad. Don't make the mistake the Israelites did of having a golden calf. Moses did the best thing perhaps when he ground it to powder and made the people eat it. The idols of gold to-day grind their worshipers to powder and the idolatry eats out all the substance, even the marrow of the bones, and leaves but a stark anatomy of manhood to shrivel into nothingness. There is no independence for you save as you stand by and for yourself. Do not make the mistake of looking to and leaning on others.

Nor mistake in yourself or in others smartness of word or deed for power and reliability. Of all gifts the common American gift of smartness is most fatal, and its history is told all over our country. We are not a brilliant people or a cultivated people or a broad people, but we are a *smart* people; and if we could get the glory out of our eyes through which we look at ourselves, we should see as others see us. Don't try to be smart, or think yourself so, or place any value on the quality. It will just ruin you. Shall I give you the natural history of a smart young man and cast his horoscope? He is the pet of the family, and then the nuisance, if not the master of the home, the bore of acquaintance, the avoidance of young women, the ridicule of elders, and carries into business, and all relations of home and life, an overweening self-sufficiency, which detracts not merely from personal worth, but from real manly power. Take any smartness you may have, and instead of sticking it out before people and making of it your claim to consideration, go to work and make with its help something so worthy and true that you and every

body else will forget that you are or ever were smart, and only know that you are active, honorable and reliable.

I might go on. We make mistakes innumerable and keep making them. Life is a bundle of mistakes. One might well sit down beside his faggot in despair. But that were neither brave nor well. Carlyle says this wisely: "Neither let mistakes nor wrong directions, of which every man in his studies and elsewhere falls into many, discourage you. *There is precious instruction to be got by finding we were wrong.* Let a man try faithfully, manfully, to be right: he will grow daily more and more right. It is at bottom the erudition on which all men cultivate themselves. Our very walking is an incessant falling, — a falling and catching of ourselves before we come actually to the pavement. It is emblematic of all that a man does."

That brave advice I would follow up by two words of direction. We have got to make mistakes. We may as well own up to the infirmity, and own up also to individual mistakes as they occur. It is not only braver to do so, but better. Let us accept them. The next thing will be, as mistakes, to forget them. That is about the best that can be done with most of them. There are a good many things which we keep alive by a sort of mental galvanism which were better locked up in a tomb, with a big stone at its mouth, beyond the peradventure of a resurrection. I don't believe too much memory is healthy. The memory that depresses, that makes morbid, that does not spur to better doing, is only a harm. It can do no good. It had better be choked. The shroud of a quick wholesome oblivion is better than the wings of a merely irritating memory. The best thing to be done with a good deal of life is to forget it, to pass the sponge over tablets whose tell-tale is of so much it will do no good to keep in sight. That is what Paul said he did. I think God gives us a hint of this in that it is only by effort, by our own spurring, that we keep many things before us at all, and whatever of eternity there be to the least deed and however clear the long-forgotten shall one day stand, is it not probable, that in the present and for own good, he draws the veil over much, the memory of which

might annoy without quickening, would be rather clog than wing, act as weight rather than impulse? My observation and experience would go in favor of forgetting that which in remembrance is of no sort of use, as I would pluck a thorn out of my finger or a hand out of the fire. The smart is not a healthy smart. The need is rather for soothing than for irritation. And every conscientious person can decide what mistakes to forget, by watching the effect they produce. That which makes strong, gives wisdom and prudence, that which helps to live, let it remain, an influence invaluable, a guard and a guide; but that which makes peevish, morbid, and cowardly and bitter, away with it. Put a millstone about it and sink it in the uttermost part of the sea.

Then I should say, — in Robertson's language, — "Organize victory" out of your mistakes; make them an element in the after struggle of life. It must needs be that mistakes come; for "no rectitude of intention will secure us from them;" and the high duty for us will be to weave them into the texture of life so that they become an element in its completeness, and not separate and broken strands of failure. Next to starting well I believe in starting ill, in being all wrong, in making a decided mistake at the start. Well used, rightly recovered from, carefully studied, it is about the best thing we can do. Many a man has been made by the mistake which would have unmade him had he not known how to organize victory out of it. One who had lived long and well told me he owed all to an early mistake, that it had made him a man, and whereas he might otherwise have floated along the current of life passably, he so learned how to bear difficulty, and make of the adversities friends, and of himself a man. In our national difficulty we owed success at last, under God, to one who had the wisdom and courage to organize victory out of mistake, to seize the true base line and hold to it, till he compelled victory. We need in all character and life the true base line. If the first is a mistake, don't submit to it, don't mourn over it, but confess it and leave it, and search till you find the true one, and fight it out on that. "Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best

Christian, or the best general, who makes the fewest false steps, but he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes." Forget mistakes, — organize victory out of them !

The thing to do with mistakes, then, is to own them and then to forget them ; drop them out of account, or set them at work for good. The nun or hermit may make no mistake, except the fatal one of being a nun or a hermit, — but so can no *man* escape. We grow ripe by mistake. Let everything go right with us, and no sickly shoot of the cellar so sickly and fruitless, but let there be mistakes from time to time, grave mistakes even, and they will furnish the real man with the nutriment out of which the vigor of stalk and fruit grow. He is a puny man who, shielded all life through by other men's care, or by favoring fortune, never commits himself to, never is confronted or overcome by a mistake. The soul requires muscle, and its muscle comes, as that of the arm, through training. Suppose the consequences of your mistake are irreparable, go into, change your life ; suppose you can look back and see how an early mistake has turned the whole current of your being. What good will it do for you to lament it, what possible vitality in a regret ? Water spilt upon the ground cannot be gathered again. There is no use in fretting over it. We do not get ahead so ; but we do get ahead, when summoning every energy we brace ourselves to meet whatever disadvantage Providence or our own selves has brought upon us, cheerfully using the past for its experience and the present for its opportunity, trusting that the future shall show that as St. Augustine made "sins repented of" to be the rounds of the ladder by which to climb to heaven, our heavenly way shall be marked by mistakes that have culminated in victories.

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It is through moral and spiritual power that the rivers of thought and feeling are to be turned.



## RABBI, WHERE DWELLEST THOU ?

A SERMON. BY REV. H. W. FOOTE.

They said unto him, Rabbi, where dwellest thou ? Jesus saith unto them, Come and see. — John i. 38, 39.

THESE two disciples had a deeper meaning in their question than they themselves knew. But something in the manner of Christ as he answered them, probably, — and much in the larger revelations of later experience and fuller knowledge, — caused the very form of the question and answer to sink into their hearts, and long after to find place in the crystalline narrative of this most spiritual of the Gospels, where every word opens to us a door of light heavenward.

Andrew and John would fain talk with the Master to whom the Baptist's word and reverent recognition directed them, and so followed him from the wild and lonely Jordan bank, where the disciples of John the Baptist found him among the waving reeds by the rushing waters, to the tent of black goats' hair, or the leafy hut of woven branches, where he abode and made a privacy among the multitudes who were drawn by the new Elijah's power to this wild spot.

A poor dwelling in which to find the Lord and Master of the world's future faith ! Yet no better is he to know among man. They who seek him hereafter must come to the borrowed shelter of some friendly house in Capernaum, or on the tossing boat upon the lake, or, more truly yet, on the solitary hill-side, under the still and star-lit cope of heaven, where he prays, — or in those darker days to come, when he will tell them, that, poorer than the creatures of the field or the birds of the air, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

And surely mankind needs to learn the lesson so affectingly taught in this Supernal Life, which crosses the path of human history and goes athwart the common wishes and ambitions of men in order that it may introduce into them a new power and a different and higher order. We misinterpret his exam-

ple, if we judge that by it he condemns earthly possessions in themselves. And the harm here is not so much to those who have, at some periods, abnegated the world by a monastic self-mortification, as to those who have often thus come to believe that, in using earthly gifts, they have excluded heavenly gifts, and still have used the earthly gifts none the less.

The Gospel is meant to influence the world as a renewing principle, taking possession of the natural life and the natural man, rather than as a destructive principle, crushing them. But the renewing principle can only work by convincing us of the superior worth of the spiritual side of life. We can only walk safely among the propensities of earth when, according to the fine expression of Lacordaire, we do so "with a detached heart." And all the ethical teaching to this effect that has ever been weighs less in the scale of influence and power than the life of Jesus Christ. He lived among men, divinely rich, because divinely poor ; and his disciples turned from men so encased in their possessions that, like the tortoise who carries his house on his back, they crawled slowly in heavenward ways, to "come and see" that all these things had no relation to the spirit, and could bring no addition to that. A truth, which, if the Gospel taught nothing else of heaven, or of life, or of duty, would be enough to keep it fresh and bracing for our age of the world. For now, as never before since the days of Rome's decline, is there danger that prosperity may smother the best life of humanity, and the vast sphere opening in every direction to the modern civilization tempts man to believe that he can change the stones which are shaping the vast building of the Present into the bread of life.

We come, then, thus to the spiritual significance which seems to have been, to Christ himself, involved in the question of his two new disciples, — "Where dwellest thou?" He heard them ask, in the recesses of his own spirit, and replied with an invitation which men have ever since heard and followed. His true home is not in these outward accidents of roof and shelter, but in the heights of communion with his Father, which shine like the top of snowy Hermon,

transfigured in the light of heaven's eternal day,—and in the spiritual deeps of meditation and inward strength, where he draws from wells exhaustless as those which in the valley of Baca “make it a pool.” If men would find him where he truly dwells, they must seek him there. And so his disciples found, as, the longer they knew him, the more he towered above them, drawing them on and up, as some mountain assumes its rightful majesty only when the gazer rises part-way toward it. So has the Christian world been trying for eighteen hundred years to see into the full secret of Christ's hidden life, and the more it gazes has found that no formularies of confession, no metaphysical definitions of nature and substance, exhaust the spiritual depth and significance of his life in God.

“Come and see!” It will not, I think, be transgressing the legitimate interpretation of this brief word of Christ, by interpolating into it an imaginary meaning, if we seek to find in it a gleam of light on the method of Providence with the human soul, with some cognate thoughts which naturally group themselves round that centre.

The course of Christ here with his two first followers is in exact accord with the way in which God deals with men. For thus it is that the eternal laws of God reveal themselves as impartially in their intensive workings in the words and ways of his dear Son, as in their diffusive working in nature and in human nature. And so here, the reserve and half drawing-back of Christ proclaim that *even the Divine cannot reveal itself to men, except in so far as they bring a seeking spirit.* They must “come and see,” if they are ever to penetrate the dwelling,—the hiding-place of power in which any truth of thought or life abides. The higher the truth, the deeper its secret. For one element in the quality of the truth itself is in the spirit in which it is sought and appropriated. God, to whose very being the truth belongs, holds it too dear to let it be lightly won. There is a reserve, which must be patiently penetrated by a patient and seeking heart. Thus the student finds it in every branch of science. The master-key to knowledge is slowly wrought out in the work of faithful, hidden

years. The established facts of natural science rest on uncounted experiments, each forming but a single link in the great chain of induction. . . . In quite another science, never shall I forget how the wise teacher of theology, whose faithful conscience and transparent honesty as a critic were only a part of his great claim to his pupils' reverence and affection, once rebuked a shallow essay in which one of his class fancied that he had criticised the Bible: "You had better read the Bible, before undertaking to write about it, sir."

How true the principle holds in *art*! The tourist glances lightly at a picture which is the best fruit of some rare genius in its perfect bloom, and hurries away, fancying that he has sounded its most profound meaning. But the secret of the master still slumbers within the canvas. Then one comes, bringing a reverent and patient spirit, and, putting away all dreams of personal success, sits down to win the heart's secret of this vision of beauty, and gladden far-off eyes with some faint copy of its perfections. And trait by trait, line by line, the soul of the artist glows forth from his work, and entrances the soul of his votary almost with a personal communion.

So it is, most strikingly, in nature. You must go and see the beauty and wonder of the world, before it is beauty and wonder *to you*. We cannot make it real to us by sitting at home and thinking about it,—at least, until we have tasted the wholesome delights of the free air and sky. Then, indeed, the winds of the hills blow for us through dusty city streets. But, even then, the healing mysteries of the Lord's beautiful world lie hid, and must be freshly sought. They lurk in the shy depths of the woods, like the squirrel and the bird that haunt the places where shadows lie and only sparks of sunlight fleck the dim ground, struggling down from the high windows of the interlacing pines. They flash in the breaking wave, whose music lives only on lonely sands. They brood, like the broad suushine, over the everlasting hills, and await, but cannot seek, their lovers. Who can imprison the unfathomable wealth of June, and carry it where he will? You can enter into the treasure-house, and be filled

with gazing ; but the treasures may not be borne away, though the very memory of them will enrich the heart. "Where dwellest thou?" we seem to ask the spirit of beauty ; and the calm breath of the stirring leaf, or the splash of waters on the shore, whisper softly, "Come and see."

Turn to a different, a more interior, application, of the same great truth. Take the formation of character, that wonderful problem which entrances the speculative mind. The secrets of the mind and heart are purely *personal*. They are gained, that is, by the fresh working of the man himself, inwardly, and are not the easy dropping of chance upon us, but the fruit of that more intimate operation of the spirit, within itself, which finds the law of its own strength in the deep privacy of its interior secrecy. Never do we gain the mastery of ourselves or of our own lives, till we have thus come within ourselves, and sought out the dwelling-place of the strong virtues by which one brings all his powers into harmony and repose. The inner voice of God's spirit to us, through conscience and affection, through the clear vocations of duty and the breathings of prayer, speaks in the secluded "oracles of the breast," and must be sought there. Living growth is from within, and not by mere accretion. Character finds its true law of development when we "commune with our own hearts, and in our own soul's chambers, and are still." I do not mean to say that this is always a conscious process. There are still and interior natures, who do, as it were by a born instinct, what comes to others only by grace, — searching, almost without knowing it, for the inward principle which will unify the discords of their being. There are others, who strive long and painfully to find this law in something *without* themselves, and are slow to learn that experience and wise and holy words and uplifting examples work on us never from outward, but through their fructification of the *spirit within*. That finest sight in God's universe, the building-up of an intelligent child of his in strength and sweetness of balanced powers, all wrought together into an harmonious whole, is the result of the grouping together of the powers round the central principle, whatever it may be,

which is the distinctive organizer of that particular life. The moulding force of individual character lies far within, and appropriates or rejects more external influences, according to its own law. Every pure and noble quality of being is rooted in the innermost groundwork of the soul itself, and we only faintly understand it, even when in a friend we most admire, unless we appreciate that its home is in the depths of the character itself.

In the beautiful tribute recently paid by a distinguished man of science \* to his great master in the investigation of nature's problems, it is said: "Nature, not education, made Faraday strong and refined. A favorite experiment of his own was representative of himself. He loved to show that water in crystallizing excluded all foreign ingredients, however intimately they might be mixed with it. Out of acids, alkalies, saline solutions, the crystal came sweet and pure. By some such natural process in the formation of this man, beauty and nobleness coalesced, to the exclusion of everything vulgar and low. He did not learn his gentleness in the world, for he withdrew himself from its culture; and still this land of England contained no truer gentleman than he. Not half his greatness was incorporate in his science, for science could not reveal the bravery and delicacy of his heart."

This interior process, thus beautifully described, belongs to the essential nature of the formation of character itself. It is the most inward thing in the world, and works only in secrecy and stillness. There alone, at the heart of a man's life, is it to be found. If you would see it in another,—if you would gain it to yourself, you must "come and see."

But the truth, on which all these different lines of illustration converge, is the strongest illustration of its own principle. In our more immediate relations to God, the problems of heart and head which solicit us invite, but do not reveal. He dwelleth in clouds and thick darkness, and the "hiding of his power" who can comprehend? As the great apostle ascended to Mars Hill to plead the cause of Christ before the curious Athenians, he saw an altar, inscribed "To the un-

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\* Professor Tyndall.

known God." And still unknown to the finite mind, infinite perfections, infinite wisdom, infinite love, are beyond our finding out. We seek to sound the boundless mystery of God's being in our thought, and the wings of the mind droop heavily in the thin air of that far flight. In nature, we think to lay hold on the skirt of his vanishing garment,—and the height says, "He is not in me," and the depth, "He is not in me." Yet faith still sees him partly unveiled in the world's beauty and blessing, and the love of an immortal spirit adores where it cannot penetrate. It is a fascination which the human spirit has always felt, drawing it thus toward the bosom of its God, who "has made it for himself, and cannot suffer it to rest except in him,"—so that men yearn with questions and with seekings, and are more rewarded by the desire to find Him, the infinite good, than if they obtain any lesser gift. The scholar Bunsen has sought to show, in his work entitled "God in History," how this divine prompting has never been absent from the human soul, but all the courses of history, though often through dark and bloody pathways, have been illumined by this one glory. And it is a joy to know that "He hath never left himself without a witness in the world," but that the aspirations and the worship of the old Aryan childhood of the race, of Turanian fire-adorers, of Japhetic mythologies, were gropings of the inextinguishable soul of man after the hope brought home to us at last in Christ. "Where dwellest thou?" the soul of his child has ever been saying to the Father, and his whisper in the heart has answered, "Come and see."

This mystery, so dear to faith, has at once an invitation and a rebuke for that spirit of investigation which ends in doubt. There is a danger of "coming to see" the facts of things in a spirit which is yet blind for the deeper mysteries behind them,—of letting the ape obscure the man, and hide the angel in our ancestry,—of seeing in force only dumb and iron law, and behind the majestic play of natural order finding not the Loving Friend. It is well for us, therefore, that the merciful twilight still tempers for us the glare of exceeding day,—that the Infinite One encompasses the brief



span of our limited horizon on every side, and draws us ever toward him by the persuasion that no scientific formula can really do away with him out of his world.

Yet the highest acquisition of faith is not of the unknown and the unknowable. The mystery of God has a revealing side. We are not bidden to "come and see," — we are not urged by the strong crying of our own souls, and comforted by celestial hopes, in a vain delusion. That which is closed to knowledge is opened to faith. Trust "casts its burden on the Lord," and through great darkness leans for his upholding hand; prayer stammers, "Abba, Father," and knows an answering peace; yea, the pressure of tribulation brings out a strength of hope which prosperity does not know. The Holy Spirit pleads with us, not unheard. And, blessed be God! that trust may be encouraged, and prayer assured, and trial sanctified, and the Spirit obeyed, he speaks to us by his dear Son. It is because God is in Christ, that the precious humanity of Jesus so comforts our human hearts. Do we speak of him as "an example"? Yes, but something more; for faultless example alone would drive us to despair, if he were not also our inspiration and our revelation. That life of love is a gospel from God to man. Those words of power are infinite grace shaping its accents to us in ways accordant with our necessity and with our weakness. Through that radiant presence shines a revealing glory, and we know him as *Emmanuel*, because *God* is *with us* in him. In Christ the knowable side of God touches men. Darkness may be the pavilion of divine power, but no darkness rests hereafter on the divine love. We may pause abashed before the stars in their circuit, and find in the mystic play of the atoms sublime intimations of unfathomable mystery; but that Reality, once lived on earth, a solid fact, renews our shrinking, wavering hope. "Master, where dwellest thou?" — whence come these strengths that seem drawn from the bosom of the Infinite? And from that deep home in which his spirit is at one with his Father, he answers, "Come and see." That voice sounds down from the heights of duty and of trust, always bidding us "come up higher;" enter into the secrets of God's coun-

sel, and the glad fellowship of his help. And the further we come, the deeper shall we see in the light of him who will lead us into all truth.

So let us come, then, with the seeking of the heart, ready to love ; of the illuminated mind, ready to bow down to worship ; of the faithful life, that waits to do his will.

Thus seeking, we shall surely find — how much ! ourselves as God would have us, and him who is to be found by the heart that will but come. In his own word, drawing out patiently its heart of meaning ; in life, so full of varied experience ; in the nature now glowing in resplendent beauty ; in the friendship which is true and real, and rests on attraction in the inner deeps ; in the Spirit in our own hearts, shall we find him, — “ not far, but nigh to every one of us.” Thus is gained the fruit of a real discipleship of Christ, of such following him as is not merely an outward recognition (which may be empty), but a true fellowship with him in spirit and in truth. For thus he comes to dwell with us in our own souls. As he himself hath said, “ If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

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Two walking together found a young tree laden with fruit ; both did gather and satisfy themselves for the present. One of them took all the remaining fruit, and carried it away with him ; the other, seeing him gone with the fruit, took up the tree itself, and planted it on his own ground, where it prospered and bore plentifully every year. The first had more fruit at the present, but the other sped best ; for he had fruit when the other had none. Thus it is with men at the hearing of sermons ; some have large memories, and can gather many observations, which they keep awhile to rehearse, not to practise. Another hath a weaker capacity ; but he gets the tree itself, the root and substance of the text, plants it in his heart, feeds on the fruits with comfort, and his soul is thereby nourished unto life eternal. — *John Spencer.*

## TOPICS OF THE MONTH.

BY J. W. THOMPSON.

## THE CHINESE QUESTION.

SINCE the introduction of Chinese laborers into the workshops of North Adams last month, an eager discussion has been going on,—on one side, to see how these new laborers can be excluded, and, on the other, to defend their right of coming, and introduce more of them, if possible. As we understand it, they would not have been introduced but that the "Crispins" had been violent and outrageous in compelling the master shoe-manufacturers to employ no labor except on the terms which they should dictate. And so, at first sight, it is a clear case of justice in favor of the employers. But again, there is a good deal to be said on the other side, in order to have the whole case before us; and it cannot be considered settled, until a serious attempt has been made to understand the position, and meet the fair claims of both parties.

There is, we are told, this peculiar hardship in the case of the journeymen shoemakers, that their trade is one which must work hard to meet sudden and large orders; that it is subject, in some of its departments, to changes and caprice of fashion, making old stock nearly worthless; that, for these reasons, there befalls every year an idle season, after a very busy one, so that the men are liable, at sudden notice, to find themselves with nothing on their hands but trades' unions or politics,—a formidable condition of things for men used to high wages, and who carry votes. The utmost care on the part of the employers will not prevent the appearance of hardship and injustice, sometimes; and this will be aggravated by that law of trade which, by compensating risks, makes the *successful* employer rich, so out of all proportion to the gains of the most skillful and willing workman.

The debates in workingmen's conventions have already shown some symptoms of a hostility and jealousy of feeling—

with just enough of plausible ground to make it liable to spread—which are sure to find their way into the political divisions of the future. It is even probable that the introduction of Chinese laborers, by compelling attention to this matter, may do something to save us from the state of things reported in Sheffield, Leeds, and Manchester. It would be the worst of political dangers if a vast operative class should grow up among us,—men armed with the ballot, trained in our schools and with the habit of organization, with no interest in common with their employers, with no prospect but to work for wages to the end of their days, with the theoretical rights and powers of citizens,—while a helpless prey, in great multitudes, to the vicissitudes of trade and speculation.

The natural security against such a state of things as many have apprehended in the coming "labor-battle" is that the workman should have a direct interest in the profits of his work; and the best symptom in the past month's history has been that some of the more intelligent have combined their means to establish co-operative workshops. To these we wish all success; and hope that the funds which they have found so abundant and effectual in their combination against their employers may be used more wisely and effectively to make them independent men of business.

There is a vein of truth, too, which has not been stated so fully as it might, in what these men have said of the danger of introducing a low standard of wages among American workmen. It would be a most serious calamity, if such a grade of poverty should ever be acclimated here as is reported of China, where the problem is to keep population within its present limits, where every inch of ground and every ounce of refuse is rigidly economized; and yet the problem is met every year by the wholesale destruction of female children, and the failure of a single crop will cause the people to die by myriads. The prosperity of a community requires to be buttressed by a standard of comfort artificially high: there ought to be a good way for even the lowest class to fall before they come near the starvation point. And we do not blame our poorer and harder-working neighbors for

their jealousy on this score. It is a right instinct that scents the danger ; we wish it would take the direction, oftener than it does, of temperance, economy, and the accumulation and combining of small capitals.

But all this does not meet the immediate question, which is one of simple justice to the strangers lately brought among us. So far, the demonstrations made by our public men have not been very edifying, or very helpful. It was a shallow as well as discreditable device, the other day, when the Senate refused to strike the word "white" from the new naturalization law, and then admitted negroes by special vote, so as to exclude only Indians and Chinese. It is — to put it mildly — uncandid, when such men as Senator Wilson speak of the act of the North Adams employers as if it were the revival of the old iniquities of the Coolie trade. It is a foolish question to ask of the President why he has not enforced the standing law against that trade, when it has not been infringed. And it seems a waste of ingenuity to devise statutes for preventing the fulfillment of contracts for labor made on foreign soil, when the real purpose is to forbid those made with *bona fide* immigrants actually residing in California. The politician's reason is very simple and transparent : that these laborers have no votes, while their German and Irish rivals have. But that is not a statesman's reason ; and it is to the discredit of our politics that no one has yet attempted to argue the whole question, fairly, intelligently, and manfully. Perhaps there has not been time ; but then, there has not been time to act properly at all. Mr. Sumner has insisted, in his usual way, upon the one point of equal justice in the law in hand. We hope he will before long give the whole matter the thorough study it demands.

#### FROM A UNITARIAN LADY.

The more I think of it the more clearly I seem to see that the air around us is murky with misunderstandings, and that nothing can be effectually done till they are cleared away and things are made to appear in their true light.

Mr. Hepworth's cause was, and is, misunderstood, owing to a previous misunderstanding about something else.

Mr. M. speaks with delight of Dr. Morison's article on "Christian Liberty," with an especial eye to the idea of liberty, as we easily see by his classing it with the words of Mr. Lowe and Dr. Bellows. Now I do not believe that Dr. Morison ever meant by that article to give "aid and comfort" to the worshipers of liberty, for certainly his ideas of the relative importance of Christianity and liberty differ very materially from theirs. But although an unprejudiced eye may easily see that he esteems liberty only in subordination to Christianity, yet in that article he really makes liberty his prominent idea, — puts it forth as a bait, as it were, which the liberty-lovers seize with avidity. And perhaps, after all, it is the best service he can render to Christianity, if he will only follow it up with another article on "Free or Liberal Christianity," making Christianity his noun, and liberty his adjective, giving the liberals to understand that, though he appreciates the meaning of liberty in all its beauty and fascination, he can yet show unto them "a more excellent way." I wish that somebody would suggest it to him, and that he would do it soon, while the liberals are on his hook.

We are happy to say that Dr. Morison did that very thing, without suggestion from us, in his admirable sermon on "The Sadducean Tendencies of the Age."

#### A WOMAN'S VOICE ON THE CREED-QUESTION.

It seems very strange and unaccountable to me that, with all the boasted and undeniably real intelligence and perspicacity in our denomination, the creed-delusion is kept up so long. Its sudden springing into existence is not so much to be wondered at; but why is it suffered to live so long without being seen and dispelled? Why, from among the intelligent eye-and ear witnesses of that Association meeting in May, has no influential voice, except Rev. A. P. Putnam's, been lifted up to pronounce the object, in fighting against which so much earnestness and eloquence were displayed, to have been a myth? Clearly it was so, for no advocate appeared for it, and Rev. Mr. Hepworth, who was seized upon and forced to stand in the place of an advocate, plainly at the outset of his remarks protested against being placed in such a light; and, as he proceeded to unfold his own cause, any unprejudiced mind might easily see that it and the target before the meeting were as different as white and black. But what was this hideous apparition

that caused so much excitement and temporary blindness? Why, a test-creed, in arrogant presumption claiming to fold its iron arms around the whole Unitarian belief, and never let it grow or change any more, and asserting its right to be set up as an idol in every Unitarian heart! No wonder that every Unitarian who saw it was stirred to spirited resistance and could see nothing else! No wonder that the battle was enthusiastic and unanimous! Why, the thing ought to have been killed as dead as a door-nail, and buried on the spot. But no, the "Christian Register" still insists upon skirmishing with it, and raises such a cloud of creed-dust that the delusion is kept up, honest people are deceived, and Mr. Hepworth is held in a false position by being identified with the imaginary and obnoxious creed-cause. Then Rev. Mr. Lowe's address, which is a protest against this same imaginary creed, has been printed and distributed, has gone to England and received there the approval of friends, as why should it not, in itself considered. And so the delusion is agitated. But is it not time now to see it in its true light, and drop it, since the controversy is all on one side, and takes attention from an irrepressible question of much more serious moment? And is it not in justice due to Mr. Hepworth to see his cause in its true light, and meet him on his own ground? Mr. Hepworth's cause is but a secondary one now, as I think he himself would acknowledge, but for all that its claims and merits ought to be seen and understood before being denounced and discarded. And to understand them the candid mind has only to turn back to the "Christian Register's" report of Mr. Hepworth's remarks at the Association meeting, and give them a careful consideration.

Every thoughtful, earnest mind now should devote itself to the one great question at issue, viz., the supremacy of Christianity *versus* that of unqualified liberty, so-called. They cannot both be supreme together; the moment a man says to another, "It is no matter whether you are a Christian or not, if you are only honest in your convictions," that man's Christianity is not supreme in his soul,—his whole soul is not consecrated to it. So each one must think and choose for himself, for the question is unavoidably coming to just this issue in our denomination. The "Statement of Faith" question is secondary, and has unfortunately been agitated prematurely. So let us not be deceived into supposing it to be the question. Neither let us be in a hurry to act until the creed-delusion is dropped, and the real, all-important question is generally understood.



## RANDOM READINGS.

BY E. H. SEARS.

## IMAGINARY DIFFICULTY.

SOME one of our excellent neighbors of the "Watchman and Reflector" says the explanation of the difficulties of Unitarians about creeds is found in Matt. xiii. 6: "Because they had no root they withered away." It seems strange to us, rather, that Baptists who hold Jesus Christ as the foundation should think that Unitarians who reject human creeds in order to get nearer to Christ, — for this according to Channing is the true Unitarianism, — should be without any root. But this is the foundation of all those societies who stand on the prime Unitarian position. No root because they come directly to Jesus Christ, and are planted in him! Certainly our neighbors need information, for they mean to be fair. We will quote from the "Declaration of Faith" of our own church, unanimously adopted, — the same which many other Unitarian churches have.

"We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a Revelation of the will of God to man, which is in complete accordance with reason, and which we accept as our guide in faith and practice. We believe in the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment; that in no human tradition, articles, or creed, is the religion of Protestants; 'so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.'

"We believe, with the primitive Christians, in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

"We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, — the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the incarnation of the Divine Word; the Mediator between God and man; the infallible Teacher, the sufficient Saviour, the ever-living Head of the Church. We believe that he came out from God, and that in him it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; that all power was given him, and all things put under him, He only excepted who did put all things under him. We believe that in him, the Anointed One, the Divine Life was manifested for the redemption of the world;

that he was the Wisdom of God and the Power of God to regenerate the human race; that in him God was manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world by his death, and saving it by his life. We believe in the miracles, the resurrection, and the sinless character of the Son of Man; that all prayer should be offered to the Father in his name and spirit; and that he is worthy of honor, love, trust, and obedience, as the Author and Finisher of our faith, our Perfect Exemplar, our Master, Redeemer, and Lord. — To us, as to the apostles, there is but One God the Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ. Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son. We seek that life eternal, which is to know him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; acknowledging that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“We believe in the Atonement, or Reconciliation of men to God; that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; that Jesus has done all that was necessary to provide the means of our salvation; and that he has suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and to make us at one with our Father in heaven. We believe that Christ's mission originated in the infinite love and mercy of the Father, who therefore needed not to be reconciled to us, but we to him. We consider that our Saviour's sufferings were endured to deliver us, not simply from punishment, but chiefly from sin; to save his people from their sins; to take away the sin of the world; — that he died, a sacrifice for sin, for the life of the world, giving himself for us to liberate us from the power of evil, and redeem us from all iniquity. We see, in the agony and crucifixion of the spotless Lamb of God, a most striking exhibition of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, Christ's love for man, God's compassion for the guilty, and his readiness to forgive the returning penitent. The cross appears to us as the very power of God to cleanse and save every soul that believeth: by the contemplation of it, we are inspired with the deepest humility, contrition, and gratitude; are led to the renunciation of our sins; and we, who were afar off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and are thus reconciled to God by the death of his Son.”

“No root!” Will our neighbours be good enough to tell us where the root is to be found?

Again, the editor says, “We of other denominations have not said things half so hard against some phases of modern Unitarianism as writers in their own ranks.” Mr. Hepworth, among others,

is named. Now if those "writers" have been more faithful against "some phases" which you of other denominations call infidelity, why, in the name of justice, don't you help them more efficiently? We are decidedly of the opinion of the "Watchman and Reflector." Among the series of lectures last winter against the skepticism of the times, excellent as they were, Dr. Peabody's impressed us as the most telling and powerful of the whole.

The real difficulty, which our neighbors have missed the theory of, we explain somewhat differently. You look at this whole thing from a sectarian standpoint. We don't. Hence you speak of a "Unitarian Camp." So, we suppose, there is a Baptist Camp, a Presbyterian Camp, and so on. Christian Unitarians, truly such, know of no "Camps," other than the fold of the Great Shepherd, which they seek to defend from the invasion of its foes, under whatever names they may be disguised. They have no little separate camps of their own, whose weakness they want covered up lest other denominations should try to "make capital" out of it, but any weakness in the great fold itself they are for casting out, whether it bears the name of Unitarian or Baptist, not caring a fig what the sectarians say about it.

PROFESSOR PHELPS has a very interesting article in the Chicago "Advance" on Spiritualism. As he is understood to have inspired the sentiments of that beautiful little book, — though savagely criticized, — "The Gates Ajar," and which has been charged with savoring of the new heresy, the Professor's views become specially interesting to its readers. He regards Spiritualism as a reality, but Satanic. He thinks it no new thing, but existing under the heathen religions, and its phenomena familiar to their votaries. He thinks the Bible explains these phenomena fully, without "trooping through the 'spheres' of Swedenborg." He closes his article with this significant passage: —

"When the late President Day, of Yale College, first had his attention called to Spiritualism, a quarter of a century ago, said he: 'Either nothing is in it, or the devil is in it.' No candid man, who knows its history during these twenty-five years, will now affirm the first wing of the President's alternative. The second is as philosophical as it is Scriptural. It is confirmed also by the testimony of missionaries who have been long familiar with the old idolatries. To their converts these modern prodigies, which are so novel to us, are an old story. They recognize them instantly as the "signs" of

the old religions of their youth. Hawaiian Christians are beginning to inquire whether America is about to re-establish the devil-worship which they have discarded."

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. — It involves two things: The right of every individual to hold and declare any convictions and opinions, so long as he does not interfere with the liberty of others ; and the right of any number of individuals of like faith to combine for its propagation, under the same proviso. But the new version of Christian liberty is this: You shall not unite to spread your faith unless you spread mine along with it. You shall not unite to propagate the Christianity of the New Testament unless you consent to propagate my opinions, which antagonize it, at the same time. A liberty that which holds the Christian freedom of every man in the community subject to the veto of every unbeliever or every sectary that lives in it. And this is the logical and abject slavery implied in a great deal of talk about liberty, creeds, and articles of faith. If men can unite to spread their faith, why in the name of honesty may they not tell the world what that faith is? And what does their liberty amount to if a minority, be it only of one, can say, "That is not my faith, but just its opposite, and you shall not spread it unless mine also is spread at your expense"? That is not freedom, but the denial of it, denial of the highest freedom there is, individual, social and Christian. Unbelievers can combine, declare and extend their unbelief, and no one can forbid them. The moment Unitarian Christians assert the same liberty for their belief, some one says, No. The non-believers veto the proceeding.

And what is the reason given? "Because we have a history." We have been acting this nonsense for some time, and consistency requires we should keep on. We utterly deny any such history except an exceedingly recent one ; and, if we had it, one would think it high time to rub it out and begin a new one.

THE YOUNG EDITOR of "The Liberal Christian" may possibly have been influenced by Dr. Thompson's fraternal exhortations to follow the lead of Dr. Bellows, who has deplored so much the presence of unbelievers in the Unitarian body ; or perhaps the editor speaks from later and deeper inspirations of his own ; or perhaps he remembers that his predecessor, Rev. W. T. Clark, was ousted from his chair for the utterance of such sentiments as his editorial contained. At any rate, some of his editorials since have been

marked with such fullness of Christian confession and such rebuke of skeptical opinions as we have rarely found. He says in one of them, "The question in this land to-day is not whether we are to have what is called freedom of thought, but whether we are to have any religion or not." And he closes his article in these pungent words: "The air is filled with pert denials. A flippant skepticism everywhere pronounces upon things which it does not think it worth while to examine or understand. Though a man may be free to think for himself, it does not follow from this that he will think at all, much less is it certain that his thinking will be of great value to himself or others. When we listen to some men, or read what they say, and observe in every utterance a parrot-like repetition of the same querulous fault-finding, the same shallow pretense of criticism, and the same narrow, bitter dogmatism with which they assailed Christianity twenty years ago, we are unable to see that they have made any high use of their boasted freedom to think for themselves, and we are tempted to address to them Hamlet's impatient injunction to the player, 'Leave thy damnable faces, AND BEGIN!'"

"LISTENING ANGELS."—We did not say that the sweet effusion from "Household Words," bearing this title, was written by Charles Dickens. We found it years ago, floating about, credited to "Household Words," and thought, as we said, that it bore traces of his magical pen, by its humane and tender touches. But we said at the same time that we did not know how much of the poetry which graced the columns of that periodical was written by Dickens. It seems this was not, but by Adelaide A. Proctor, and may be found in the illustrated edition of her poems, published in 1866, by Ticknor and Fields. So says a correspondent of the "Transcript," who informs us that nearly all her published writings appeared anonymously in "Household Words," or "All the Year Round." "Listening Angels" may also be found, as we see by turning to it, in the volume of her poems published in 1865, as one of the "Blue and Gold" series, by Ticknor and Fields. It is in company with many other effusions which we drew from some time ago, but all of whose richness and beauty we had not explored. We are glad to be called to them again, not only to correct any erroneous inference from what we wrote, but to enjoy them once more. If our readers have not the volume, they will find it a treasure worth getting. No wonder many of these poems should have been attributed to Dickens, when published anonymously in his periodical; for many of them

have the choicest aroma of his humane sympathies. "The Homeless Poor," for example, bears the richest flavor of "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield." While the volume is open, we cannot help extracting a short poem, on which we alight casually, which appeals to the most beautiful heart-faith and the tenderest sensibility.

#### THE WARRIOR TO HIS DEAD BRIDE.

If in the fight my arm was strong,  
And forced my foes to yield, —  
If conquering and unhurt I came  
Back from the battle-field, —  
It is because thy prayers have been  
My safeguard and my shield.

My comrades smile to see my arm  
Spare or protect a foe ;  
They think thy gentle pleading voice  
Was silenced long ago ;  
But pity and compassion, love,  
Were taught me first by woe.

Thy heart, my own, still beats in Heaven  
With the same love divine  
That made thee stoop to such a soul,  
So hard, so stern, as mine.  
My eyes have learned to weep, my love,  
Since last they looked on thine.

I hear thee murmur words of peace  
Through the dim midnight air ;  
And a calm falls from angel stars  
And soothes my great despair.  
The heavens themselves look brighter, love,  
Since thy sweet soul is there.

And if my heart is once more calm,  
My step is once more free,  
It is because each hour I feel  
Thou prayest still for me ;  
Because no fate or change can come  
Between my soul and thee.

It is because my heart is stilled,  
Not broken by despair ;  
Because I see the grave is bright,  
And death itself is fair.  
I dread no more the wrath of heaven, —  
I have an angel there !

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

ALASKA AND ITS RESOURCES. By William H. Dall. Boston: Lee & Shepard. 8vo., pp. 627.

Mr. Dall went to Alaska in the autumn of 1866. The death of Robert Kennicott — whom he commemorates in a warm and generous eulogy — left him the fittest person to head the scientific corps, and he spent two seasons in exploration of the country. This volume is a full and interesting report. Its typography, illustrations, and style of publication are remarkably handsome; while the material appears to include everything which one could look for in such a narrative. A large part of it consists of the record, from day to day, of journeys and explorations, principally in the territory of the Yukon, that great river flowing into the Pacific a little south of Behring's Straits. His narrative abounds in notices, with numerous drawings, of the scenery, manners, arts, and natural history of the region; it is the journal of an energetic, intelligent, and fluent observer. It is followed by chapters showing much careful and elaborate research, of which we can only indicate the topics. First, Geography of Alaska, with much descriptive and critical information; then the History, including brief notices of the chronology as far back as the early Spanish voyages of the sixteenth century, and including the diplomatic correspondence respecting our purchase of the territory; then the Aboriginal Inhabitants, of whose dialects copious comparative vocabularies are given in an appendix; then the Climate of Alaska, and its resources in agriculture, mines, and fisheries, with some notice of the adjacent territories. In bulk this volume is more than enough; and in substance — bating some surprising omissions, which the "Nation" has pointed out — nothing seems to be wanting to make it as complete, authentic, and valuable a record as we could wish of a territory whose resources are a surprise even to those most sanguine and interested at the time of its purchase.

A.

## OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED.

From the American Unitarian Association. "Daily Bread, and Other Stories," highly interesting and heartily recommended.

"Rocks and Shoals." By George H. Hepworth, in which the



dangers and safeguards of young men are discussed with vigor and point and the duties of the church in reference to them set forth with clearness and power.

"Steps of Belief." By James Freeman Clarke. We hope in our next to be furnished with a notice which shall do justice to this thoughtful and able contribution to the literature of liberal Christianity. It is marked by all Dr. Clarke's ingenuity of method, clearness of style, aptness of illustration, and force of reasoning. We agree in its main conclusions, though starting from different premises and pursuing different "steps."

From Fields, Osgood & Co. "Miracles Past and Present." By William Mountford. A volume for scientists to look into, for "defenders of the faith" to consult, for doubters about the miraculous in the Bible to read with profit; altogether one of the most remarkable books of Pneumatology as related to Biblical hermeneutics which has appeared in our time.

"The Seat of Empire." By Charles Carlton Coffin ["Carlton"]. This little book reads almost like a tale of romance. Its descriptions are pictures very vividly drawn, and you pass from one to another with the ease and rapidity with which you are carried along in an artificial panorama. It is a book to kindle even the dulllest brain, and will be read with eager interest by all who wish for valuable and at the same time highly seasoned information about the great Northwest.

From the Catholic Publication Society. "An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent." By John Henry Newman, D.D. A book not to be read but with profound admiration of its author's ability, learning, and piety, however far the reader may be from yielding "assent" to the whole "Grammar." The principles of the Essay are applied with great force to the proof of the divine origin of Christianity.

From Hurd & Houghton. Hans Christian Anderson's works,—"In Spain and Portugal," and "O. T." These volumes both commend themselves at a glance by their handsome looks. Of the former we are able to say that the inside view does not disappoint the reader. It is a bright and entertaining narrative of what was seen by an observing eye in a tour through the countries named in the title, and affords much agreeable information in an attractive style. Of the latter we can only speak by anticipation, having placed it where we can take it up in the summer breathing-time, quite confident that it is one of those books with which we are sure to fill up a leisure hour agreeably.

J. W. T.